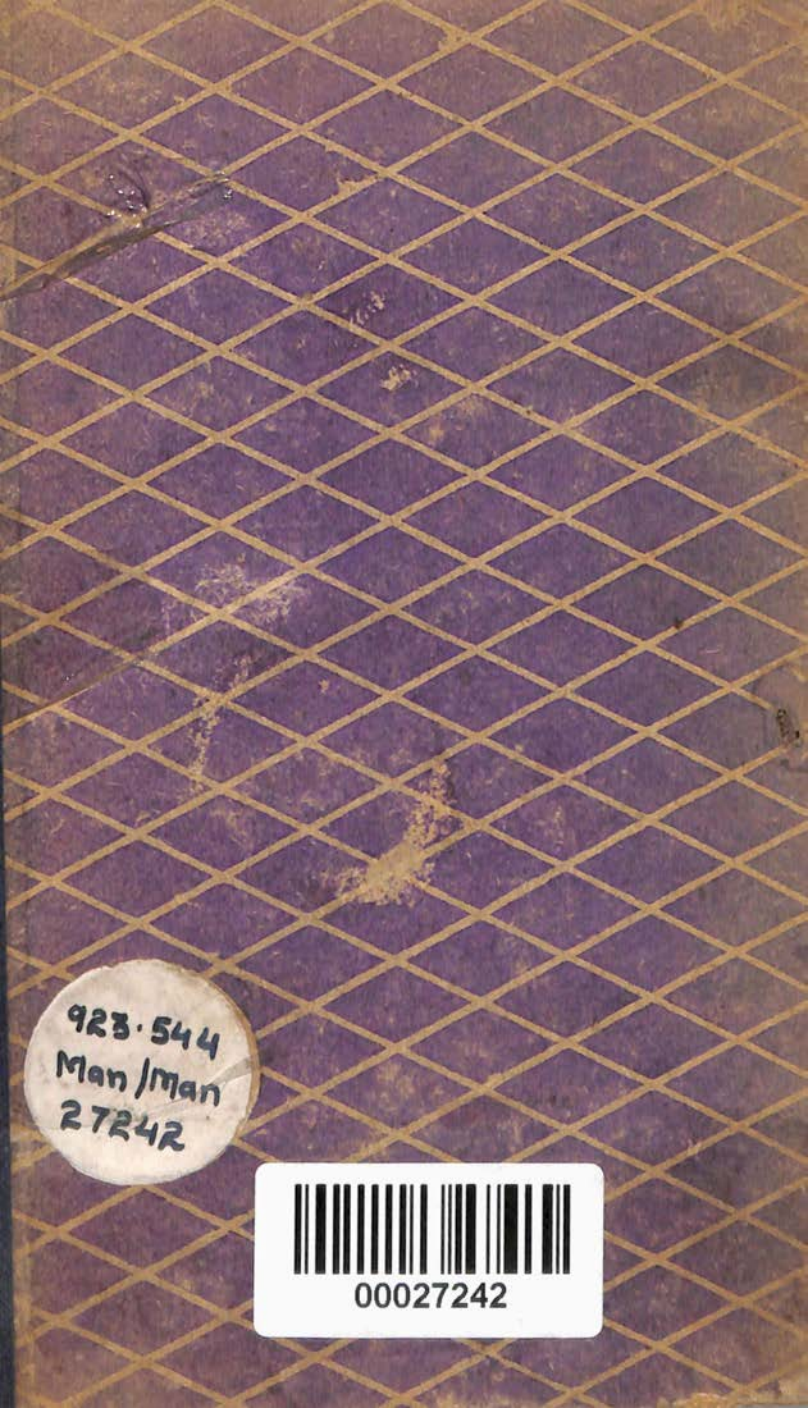
923·544
Man/man
27242

00027242

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 21 October, 2015

240 Library Society

MANUSCRIPT

of Bombay

TRANSMITTED FROM

ST. HELENA,

27242

BY

AN UNKNOWN CHANNEL.

910

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

923.544
Man/Man
27242
Ref
944.05

T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Work, which is equally distinguished by its spirit and its ingenuity, was given to the Publisher, with an assurance of its being brought from St. Helena, though an air of mystery was affectedly thrown round the mode of its conveyance.

Whether it be really written by Buonaparte, or by some confidential friend, is a matter that must be left entirely to conjecture. It bears some resemblance to his style, more to his manner, and is altogether just what the ostensible Author, or an able apologist under his name, might be expected to say of his opinions, motives, and actions.

MANUSCRIPT,

&c.

I DO not write commentaries: the events of my reign are sufficiently known, and I am not obliged to feed the curiosity of the public. I give a sketch of those events, because my character and my intentions may be strangely disfigured, and I have at heart to appear such as I really was, both in the eyes of my son and in those of posterity.

This is the object of this tract. I am forced to make use of an indirect channel in publishing it. For if it were to fall into the hands of the English ministry, I know by experience, that it would remain buried in an office.

My life has been so extraordinary, that the admirers of my power imagined that even my childhood must have been uncommon. But they are mistaken. There was nothing singular in my early life. I was only an obstinate and inquisitive child. My first education was contemptible, like every thing in Corsica. I learned French easily enough from the soldiers of the garrison, with whom I passed my time.

I succeeded in what I undertook, because I chose it: my desires were strong, and my character decided. I never hesitated: this gave me the advantage over every body. The will depends indeed on the temper of the individual; it is not the privilege of every man to be master at home.

My understanding led me to detest impositions. I always discerned truth at once, and, for that reason, I always saw better than others to the bottom of things. The world was to me always in fact, never

in right. I scarcely resembled any man. My very nature was always isolated.

I never discovered that study could be of any use to me; in fact it did nothing for me but teach me means. Mathematics alone ever availed me. The rest was lost time. I studied, however, from vanity.

My intellectual faculties, nevertheless, took their bent without my assistance. They proceed from a great degree of mobility in the fibres of my brain. I thought faster than others, so that I had always time to reflect. And my depth of thought consisted in this.

My mind was too active to allow me to be amused with the ordinary pursuits of youth. I was not indeed quite ignorant of them; but I sought interest elsewhere. This disposition placed me in a kind of solitude, where I met nothing but my own thoughts. And this kind of existence became habitual in every situation.

I loved to solve problems: I sought them in the mathematics, but I was soon satisfied, for the order of matter is ex-

tremely bounded. I then sought them in moral order, and it is the pursuit in which I have best succeeded. This species of search has become habitual: to it I owe the great steps I took in politics and war.

My birth destined me to the service, and I was therefore sent to the military college. I obtained a lieutenant's commission at the beginning of the revolution. I never received any rank with so much delight as that. The height of my ambition was then confined to wearing one day a bullion epaulette on each shoulder: a colonel of artillery seemed to me the *ne plus ultra* of human grandeur.

I was then too young to take any interest in politics. I was no judge of man in general, neither was I surprised or alarmed at the disorder that then reigned, because I could not compare it with any other period. I accommodated myself to circumstances. I was not yet difficult.

I was employed in the army of the Alps. It did nothing that an army should do. It was ignorant both of war and dis-

cipline. I was at a bad school. It is true we had no enemies to fight; our only duty was to prevent the Piedmontese from passing the Alps, and nothing was so easy.

Anarchy reigned in our cantonments; the soldiers had no respect for the officers, the officers scarcely obeyed the generals, and these were every day changed or checked by the representatives of the people: the army only acknowledged in these last the idea of power, the strongest hold over the human mind. I then perceived the danger of civil influence in military affairs, and I have always guarded against it.

It was not talent, but loquacity, which gained credit in the army; all depended on that popular favour which is obtained by vociferation.

I never had that community of sentiment with the vulgar which produces field eloquence. I never had the talent of moving the people; so that I played no part at that time in the army; but I had the more time for reflection.

I studied war; not on paper, but in the field. I saw fire for the first time in a slight

affair of rifle corps near Mont Genêvre. The balls were not thick; they wounded but few of our people. I felt no kind of emotion; it was not worth while; I attended to the action. It appeared evident to me that neither side had the least intention of effecting any thing by their fire; they merely shot at each other for conscience sake, and because it is customary to do so in war. This want of object vexed me; resistance put me out of humour; I observed our ground; I took a musket from a wounded man, and prevailed on a good-natured captain, who commanded, to keep up his fire while I should go, with ten or twelve men, to cut off the Piedmontese.

It appeared to me to be very easy to gain a height which commanded their position, by crossing a grove of fir trees, on which our left was sustained. Our captain rallied; the company gained ground; they drove the enemy towards us; and, as soon as he began to break up, I brought forward my men. Our fire hampered his retreat; we killed a few, and took twenty prisoners; the rest made their escape.

I give an account of my first trial of

arms, not because it gave me the rank of captain, but because it initiated me into the secrets of war. I perceived that it was easier than is commonly believed to beat an enemy, and that the great art lies in not wavering during action, and above all in not making any but decisive movements, because it is thus that the soldier is carried along.

I had gained my spurs; I fancied I had experience, and from that time I felt a decided taste for a profession in which I succeeded so well. I thought of nothing else, and I set about solving all the problems which a field of battle can offer. I would fain have studied war in books, but I possessed none. I endeavoured to recollect the small portion of history that I had read, and I compared these accounts with the facts before my eyes. I thus formed a theory concerning war which time has developed, but never disproved.

I led this insignificant life till the siege of Toulon. I then had the command of a battalion, and in that command might have some influence on the success of the siege.

Never was army so ill conducted as ours. No one knew who commanded. The generals dared not, for fear of the Representatives of the People, and these were still more frightened at the Committee of Public Safety. The commissaries plundered, the officers drank, the soldiers were starving—but they were careless and brave. This very disorder inspired more courage than discipline; and I became satisfied that mechanical armies are good for nothing. They have proved so.

All was done in our camp by motions and acclamations. This way of going on was insupportable to me, but I could not prevent it, so I pursued my own plans without taking notice of it.

I was perhaps the only man in the army who had a plan; but it was my humour to have an end in every thing. I employed myself in examining the enemy's position and our own; I compared his moral means with ours; I saw that here we had every thing, and he nothing. His expedition was a miserable scheme, the catastrophe of which he must have foreseen: and he must

be weak indeed, who foresees his own discomfiture.

I sought the best points of attack; I calculated the range of our batteries, and I pointed out the proper positions. The experienced officers thought them too dangerous, but battles are not won by experience. I persisted; I shewed my plan to Barras; he had been a sailor: these brave men understand nothing of war, but they are intrepid. Barras approved, because he wished to finish the business. Besides, the Convention was not to call him to account for arms and legs, but for his success.

My artillerymen were brave and inexperienced—the best of all possible men for soldiers. Our attacks succeeded; the enemy were frightened, they dared not attempt any thing against us. They stupidly sent balls which fell as chance directed, and did no execution. The fire I directed answered better. I was zealous, because I expected promotion; but I also liked success for its own sake. I passed my time in the batteries—I slept in the trenches.

Nothing is well done that one does not do one's self. We learnt from the prisoners that all was going to ruin in the place. At length it was evacuated in a shameful manner.

We had merited well of our country. I was made brigadier-general. I was employed, denounced, cashiered, ballotted for, by faction and intrigue. I conceived a decided horror for the anarchy that was then at its height, and I never became reconciled to it. This murderous government was the more detestable to me as it was absurd and self-destructive. It was a perpetual revolution, the very leaders of which never seemed to think of any permanent establishment.

A general, but without employment, I went to Paris because it was the only place where I could get any thing. I attached myself to Barras, because he was the only man I knew. Robespierre was dead: Barras played an active part: I was forced to attach myself to some one, and to some thing.

The affair of the sections was coming on: I took little interest in it, because I

cared less for politics than war. I did not think of being an actor in the scene; but Barras proposed to me to take the command of the force armed against the insurgents, under him. As a general, I rather preferred being at the head of the troops to fighting in the ranks for the sections, where I had no business.

We had only a handful of men and two four-pounders to defend the riding-house. A column from the sections came to attack us, to its cost. I fired my field pieces: the sectionaries fled; I pursued; they threw themselves upon the steps of St. Roque. The street was so narrow that we could only bring forward one of our pieces, with which we fired upon the mob; a few were killed; the rest dispersed: and the whole was over in ten minutes.

This event, trifling in itself, produced important consequences; it prevented the revolution from a retrograde movement. I naturally attached myself to the party for which I had fought, and I thus found myself bound to the revolutionary cause. I began to fathom it, and was convinced that

it would be victorious: it was in possession of opinion, numbers, and boldness.

The affair of the sections made me a general of division, and gave me a kind of celebrity. As the victorious party trembled for their triumph, they kept me at Paris against my wishes; for my only ambition was to engage in war in my new rank.

I remained then idle in Paris. I had no connections there; I had no habitual society; that of Barras was the only one I frequented, and there I was well received. It was there I first saw my wife, who has had a great influence on my life, and whose memory will be for ever dear to me.

I was not insensible to the charms of women, but to that period I had not been spoiled by them; and my character made me shy of them. Mad. de Beauharnais was the first who encouraged me. She said some flattering things on my military talents one day when I was sitting by her. Her praises intoxicated me: I talked to her continually; I followed her every where; I was passionately in love with her; and

all our society had perceived it long before I dared to tell her so.

My sentiments were talked of; Barras taxed me with them. I could have no reasons for denying them. "In that case," said he, "you must marry Mad. de Beau-"harnais. You have your rank and ta-"lents to make the most of; but you are "insulated, without fortune and without "connections: you must marry; it gives "consequence. Mad. de Beauharnais is "agreeable and intelligent, but she is a "widow. Her situation has now no ad-"vantages: women no longer act a part; "they must marry to have any influence: "you have resolution; you will make your "way; you suit her. Will you entrust me "to negociate for you?"

I awaited her answer with anxiety: it was favourable: Mad. de Beauharnais granted me her hand; and if I have experienced any moments of happiness in my life, it is to her I owe them.

My station in the world changed after my marriage. Under the directory a sort of social order, in which I had gained a tolerably elevated rank, had been re-esta-

blished. Ambition in me had become rational; I might aspire to any thing.

As to ambition, I had none but to be made a commander in chief; for a man is nothing unless he has a military reputation before him. I thought myself certain of acquiring one, for I felt an instinctive talent for war; but I had no pretences on which to found such a claim. I was obliged to make some: in those times there was no difficulty.

The army of Italy was a mere skeleton, for it had not been employed. I suggested to send it to attack Austria in the point where she was most secure; that is to say, in Italy.

The Directory was at peace with Russia and Spain. But Austria in the pay of England had strengthened her army, and kept us in check on the Rhine. It was clear that we ought to make a diversion in Italy; to alarm Austria; to give a lesson to the petty princes of Italy who were leagued against us; in short, to give a decided colour to the war, which it had hitherto wanted.

This plan was so simple, it suited the

Directory so well because it wanted success to keep up its credit, that I made haste to present it, lest it should be forestalled. It met with no opposition, and I was named commander in chief of the army of Italy.

I set out to join it. It had been reinforced from the army of Spain, and I found it fifty thousand strong, destitute of every thing but good will. I was to try it. A very few days after my arrival, I ordered a general movement throughout the line. It extended from Nice to Savona. It was at the beginning of April, 1796.

In three days we carried all the Austro-Sardinian posts which defended the heights of Liguria. The enemy being briskly attacked, concentrated his forces. We met him on the 10th at Montenotte; he was beaten. On the 14th we attacked him at Millesimo, he was beaten again, and we separated the Austrians from the Piedmontese. These last took up a position at Mondovi, whilst the Austrians retired on the Po, to cover Lombardy.

I beat the Piedmontese; in three days I seized every position in Piedmont, and we were within nine leagues of Turin, when I received an aide-de-camp, who came to sue for peace.

I then, for the first time, looked on myself not merely as a general, but as a man called upon to influence the fate of nations. I saw that I had a place in history.

This peace changed my plans. I no longer confined my views to making war in Italy, but resolved to conquer it. I felt that by enlarging the ground of the revolution, I gave a more solid base to its superstructure. It was the best means of securing its success.

The court of Piedmont had given up all its strong places to us. It had put the country into our hands: we were masters beyond the Alps and Appenine. We were sure of our points of strength, and tranquil concerning a retreat.

From this fine position I attacked the Austrians. I crossed the Po at Plaisance, and the Adda at Lodi: it was not without

difficulty; but Beaulieu retired, and I entered Milan.

The Austrians made incredible efforts to recover Italy. I was obliged to beat their armies five times before I succeeded.

Once master of Italy, it was necessary to establish the revolutionary system in order to unite the country to France by common principles and common interests;—that is to say, that it was necessary to destroy the ancient system of ranks and establish equality; because it is the main spring of the revolution. I foresaw that I should have the clergy, the nobility, and their dependants against me; that they would resist stoutly,—but I resolved to overcome them by arms, and not to stir the people.

I had done great things, but it was necessary to assume a corresponding tone and attitude. The revolution had destroyed every species of dignity; I could not give back to France the pomp of royalty: I gave her the lustre of victory, and the language of a victor.

I resolved to become the protector of

Italy, and not her conqueror. I succeeded by maintaining the discipline of the army, by punishing revolt severely; but above all, by the establishment of the Cisalpine republic. By that institution I satisfied the avowed wish of the Italians—to be independent. I held out great hopes to them: it depended on themselves to realise them by embracing our cause. They were allies I was procuring for France.

This alliance will last long between the two peoples, because it is founded on common interests and common services: they had the same opinions and the same springs of action. Without me they would have kept up their old enmity. Sure of Italy, I scrupled not to venture into the very heart of Austria. I arrived in sight of Vienna, and I signed the treaty of Campo Formio. It was a glorious act for France.

The party I had countenanced on the 18 Fructidor had remained master of the republic. I had favoured it because it was mine, and because it was the only one calculated to push on the revolution. Now,

the more I had taken part in public affairs the more I was convinced of the necessity of accomplishing the revolution, because it was the fruit of public opinion and of the age: every thing that retarded its progress prolonged the crisis.

Peace was made on the continent; we were only at war with England, and for want of a field of battle we were inactive. I was conscious of my powers: they were of a nature to distinguish me, but they were unemployed. I knew, however, that in order to remain in sight I must fix attention, and the only means of doing so was by extraordinary undertakings; because men are grateful for excitation. In consequence of this opinion I undertook the expedition to Egypt. It was attributed to profound speculations on my part: but I had no other motive than not to remain idle after the peace I had just concluded.

This expedition would give a high idea of the power of France; it would fix attention on its commander; it would surprise Europe by its boldness. These were more

than sufficient motives for the undertaking; but I had not then the slightest wish to dethrone the Grand Turk, or even to make myself a Pasha.

I prepared for my departure in profound silence: it was necessary to our success, and added to the singular character of the expedition.

The fleet set sail. I was obliged to destroy that nest of nobility at Malta*, as I passed, because it served nobody but the English. I was afraid lest some old leaven of honour might have tempted these knights to defend themselves and retard me; fortunately they surrendered even more ignominiously than I had hoped for.

The battle of Aboukir destroyed the fleet, and delivered up the sea to the English. From that moment I anticipated the catastrophe of the expedition:—for every army which cannot be recruited must sooner or later capitulate.

Meantime we were forced to remain in Egypt, for we had no means of leaving it.

* It is not possible to do justice to the original expression, *Cette gentilhomière de Malte.*—T.

I resolved to put a good face upon a losing game. I succeeded tolerably.

I had a fine army: it required occupation, and I finished the conquest of Egypt to fill up the time. By that means I opened to science the fairest field she ever explored.

Our soldiers indeed were a little surprised at finding themselves in the freehold of Sesostris; but they took it very well, and it was so singular to see a Frenchman among such ruins, that they themselves were diverted at it.

Having nothing more to do in Egypt, I thought it would be interesting to go to Palestine, and attempt to conquer it. This expedition had a romantic air; I allowed myself to be seduced by it; but I was ill informed with regard to the obstacles I was to meet, and I did not take troops enough with me.

Having passed the desert, I learned that forces had been assembled at St. Jean d'Acre; I could not despise them; I was forced to march thither. The place was defended by a French engineer. I per-

ceived it by the resistance it made. I was obliged to raise the siege: the retreat was disastrous. For the first time I had to encounter the opposing elements; but we were not overcome.

On my return to Egypt, I received the public journals by way of Tunis. From them I learned the deplorable state of France, the disgrace of the directory, and the success of the coalition. I thought I might serve my country a second time. No motive now detained me in Egypt: the enterprise was at an end. Any general was competent to sign a capitulation which time would render inevitable, and I set out without any farther design than that of re-appearing at the head of the armies to lead them back to victory.

On landing at Frejus, my presence excited enthusiasm in the people. My military glory reanimated those who had been beaten. The roads were crowded as I passed: my journey had the air of a triumph, and on my arrival at Paris I found that I was all-powerful in France.

I found the government in a state of

anarchy; its imbecility had brought it within an ace of its ruin. Every one was for saving his country, and every one proposed his plan. All these various schemes were confided to me; I was the pivot upon which every coalition turned; but there was not a single head capable of conducting any fixed plan. They all relied on me, because they all required the sword. I relied on nobody, and I was free to choose the plan which best suited my own.

Fortune seemed ready to place me at the head of the state. I prepared to be master of the revolution, for I did not choose to be only its chief: that part would not have suited me. I was then called upon to prepare the future fate of France,—perhaps that of the world.

But it was necessary first to make war; to make peace; to put down faction; to found my authority. It was necessary to put the huge machine, called government, in motion. I knew the weight of the resistance, and should then have preferred the single trade of war; for I loved the

authority of head quarters and the emotion of the field of battle. In short, at that moment I felt more disposed to restore the military superiority of France than to govern it.

But I had no choice in my destiny. I easily perceived that the reign of the Directory was near its end; that some imposing authority must be put in its place, in order to save the state; that there is nothing truly imposing but military glory. The Directory could then only be succeeded by me, or by a state of anarchy. The choice of France was not doubtful. On this head public opinion enlightened my own.

I proposed to supply the place of the Directory by a consulship; so far was I from conceiving the idea of assuming the sovereign power. The republicans proposed to elect two consuls; I demanded a third, because I did not choose an equal. The first place in this triumvirate was justly my due; it was all I aimed at.

My proposal was received by the republicans with distrust. They already

perceived a dictator among the triumviri; they combined against me. Even the presence of Sieyes could not pacify them. He had taken upon him to draw up a constitution; but the Jacobins felt more terror at my sword than confidence in the pen of their old Abbé.

All parties were now ranged under two banners: on one side were the republicans who opposed my elevation, and on the other all France demanding it. It was therefore inevitable at that period, because the majority always ends by succeeding. The first had established their head-quarters in the council of Five Hundred; they made a resolute defence; we were obliged to win the battle of St. Cloud to bring about this revolution. At one time I thought it would have been carried by acclamation.

The wishes of the public had given me the first place in the state: the resistance they had met with did not alarm me, because it proceeded from persons blasted in the opinion of that public. The royalists had not appeared; they had been taken by surprise. The body of the people had

confidence in me, because they knew that the revolution could not have better security than mine. I derived my strength solely from being at the head of the interests created by that revolution, since, had I forced it backwards, I should have come upon the ground of the Bourbons.

It was important that all should be new in the nature of my power, in order that all kinds of ambition might find their aliment. But there was nothing defined in it, and that was its defect.

By the constitution I was only the first magistrate of the republic; but my staff of office was a sword. My constitutional rights, and the ascendency given me by my character and actions, were incompatible. The public felt as well as I did that this could not last, and every one took measures accordingly.

I found more courtiers than I wanted; they formed a train: and I was not at all in pain about the progress of my authority, but very much so as to the material situation of France.

We had allowed ourselves to be beaten:

the Austrians had recovered Italy, and overturned my labours. We had no army to employ offensively; there was not a sous in the exchequer, and no means of supplying it. The conscription only went on as it pleased the country mayors. Sieyes had drawn up an inefficient and wordy constitution. All that constitutes the strength of a state was annihilated; the weak parts only remained.

Forced by circumstances, I thought it right to demand peace. I could then do it in good earnest, because it would have made my fortune: later, it would have been disgraceful.

Mr. Pitt refused it, and never did statesman commit so great a blunder; for that was the only opening for the allies to make it with safety: France, by demanding peace, acknowledged that she was conquered; and nations may rise from every reverse if they do not consent to their own disgrace.

Mr. Pitt refused it. He saved me from committing a great error, and he extended the empire of the Revolution over all Eu-

rope—an empire that even my fall has not been able to destroy. Had he then left it to itself, it would have been confined to France.

Thus I was forced to go to war. Massena defended himself in Genoa; but the armies of the Republic no longer dared to cross either the Rhine or the Alps. We must return to Italy, we must return to Germany, before we could a second time dictate the terms of peace to Austria.—Such was my plan; but I had neither soldiers, ordnance, nor small arms.

I called out the conscripts;—I set armourers to work;—I roused the sentiments of that national honour, which is never more than lulled in the breast of a Frenchman. I assembled an army: half of it still wore the clothing of the peasantry. Europe laughed at my soldiers; but she paid dearly for her momentary mirth.

However, it was impossible openly to take the field with such an army. But at least it was feasible to surprise the enemy, and take advantage of that surprise.—

General Suchet drew him on towards the defiles of Nice; Massena protracted the defence of Genoa from day to day. I set out;—I advanced towards the Alps;—my presence, the grandeur of the enterprize, animated the soldiers. They had no shoes, but they marched as if each belonged to the van-guard.

At no time in my life did I ever feel such a sentiment as that, with which I entered the defiles of the Alps. The mountain echoes resounded with the shouts of the army. They announced an uncertain but probable victory. I was re-entering Italy—the theatre of my first campaign. My cannon slowly climbed the rocks. My first grenadiers reached the summit of the St. Bernard. They threw up their hats, decorated with red feathers, into the air, and shouted for joy. The Alps were crossed, and we poured down like a torrent.

General L'Asne commanded the advanced guard. He seized Ivrée, Verceil, Pavia, and secured the passage of the Po. The whole army crossed it without interruption.

Soldiers and generals were young alike at that time. We had our fortune to make. We made light of fatigue, still lighter of danger. We were careless of every thing, but of that glory which is only to be obtained on the field of battle.

At the news of my arrival, the Austrians manœuvred upon Alexandria. Crowded up in that town, at the moment I appeared before its walls, their columns spread themselves in front of the Bormida. I attacked them. Their artillery was superior to mine; it disordered our young battalions; they gave ground. The line was kept only by two battalions of the guards and the forty-fifth. But I expected some corps that were marching in file. Dessaix's division arrived; the line rallied. Dessaix formed his column of attack, he carried the village of Marengo, upon which the centre of the enemy was posted. But that great general was killed at the very moment in which he had decided an immortal victory.

The enemy sought shelter under the walls of Alexandria. The bridges were too nar-

row for them to pass; a dreadful confusion ensued; we took bodies of artillery, and whole battalions. Crowded up beyond the Tanaro, without communication, without retreat, threatened on the rear by Massena and Suchet, with a victorious army in front, the Austrians submitted. Melas begged to capitulate—it was unheard of in the annals of war. The whole of Italy was restored to me, and the conquered army laid down their arms at the feet of our conscripts.

This day was the brightest of my life, for it was one of the brightest for France. All was changed for her; she was soon to enjoy a peace which she had conquered.—She lay down to rest like a lion. She must be happy, for she was great.

Faction was at rest; it was dazzled into silence. La Vendee was calmer; the Jacobins were forced to thank me for the victory, for it turned to their account. I had no rivals.

Common danger and public enthusiasm had forced every party to join for the moment. Security divided them. Wherever there is not an incontestable centre of power

men will be found who will hope to incline it towards themselves. It is what happened to mine. My authority was only that of a temporary magistracy; it was therefore not unalterable. Whoever had vanity, and believed himself possessed of talent, began a campaign against me. The tribune became the citadel whence they began their attack, under the name of the executive power.

If I had yielded to their declamations, it had been all over with the state. It had too many enemies to venture to divide its forces, or to lose time in words. The recent trial was a tolerably rude proof, but it had not sufficed to silence those, who will always prefer the interest of their private vanity to that of their country. They amused themselves, in order to gain popularity, with resisting the taxes, abusing the government, and hampering its proceedings, as well as keeping back the recruits for the army.

Had this continued, we should have fallen a prey to the enemy in ten days. We were not yet strong enough to hazard it.

My power was too new to be invulnerable. The consulate would have faded like the directory, if I had not destroyed the opposition by a stroke of policy. I deposed the factious tribunes. The world of Paris called this to *eliminate* them; the word made its fortune*.

This trifling event, which is now assuredly forgotten, changed the constitution of France, both internally and with regard to Europe. The enemies of the revolution, both within and without, were too violent not to force her to adopt the form of a dictatorship, as every other republic has done in moments of danger. Balanced powers can only answer in peaceful times. They were obliged to increase mine on the contrary every time it appeared in danger, in order to prevent a relapse.

I should, perhaps, have done better, had I frankly insisted on the dictatorship at once,

* This is an awkward and periphrastic translation, but the real English *expel*, or in the other sense *warn-out*, would never do: the word had till then, even in France, been rarely used—and the run that it had was but for a time.

since I was accused of aspiring to it. Every one would have been a judge of what they called my ambition: I believe it would have been better; for monsters appear greater at a distance than close by. The dictatorship would have had the advantage of leaving nothing to guess of for the future; of leaving opinion undivided, and of intimidating the enemy by shewing the resolution of France.

But I perceived that this high authority was placed, as of itself, in my hands. I had no occasion to receive it officially. I exercised it in fact, if not by right, and it was sufficient to survive the crisis, and to save France and the revolution.

My task then was to terminate the revolution, by giving it a lawful character, that it might be acknowledged and legitimated by the commonwealth of Europe.

All revolutions have undergone the same conflicts. Ours could not expect to be exempt from them; but she might claim in her turn her right of citizenship in that commonwealth.

I knew that before we proposed it, our

principles must be fixed; our legislation agreed upon, and our excesses repressed. I believed myself strong enough to succeed, and I was not mistaken.

The principle of the revolution was the abolition of castes, or in other words equality. I respected it. The office of Legislation is to regulate principles. In this spirit I made laws. Excesses had shewn themselves in the existence of factions. I did not notice them, and they disappeared. They had shewn themselves in the destruction of religious worship; I re-established it. In the existence of emigrants; I recalled them. In the general disorder of administration; I reformed it. In the ruin of the finance; I restored it. In the want of an authority competent to govern France; I gave her that authority by taking into my own hands the reins of government.

Few men have done so much as I did then in so short a time. History will one day record what France was at my accession, and what she was when she gave laws to Europe.

I had no occasion to employ arbitrary power to accomplish these stupendous works. Probably it would not have been refused me: but I would not have accepted it, because I have always detested whatever is arbitrary. I loved good order and laws. I made many, and I made them severe and precise, but just; because a law which permits no exception is always just. I caused them to be rigorously observed, for such is the duty of the throne, but I respected them. They will survive me: and that will reward my labours.

All seemed to prosper. The state revived; good order began to re-appear. I devoted myself ardently to the work, but I felt that there was something wanting in the system—that is to say, a definitive.

However strong my desire might be to give the revolution a permanent establishment, I clearly saw that I should have to overcome great obstacles before I succeeded: for there was a necessary antipathy between the old and new systems. They formed two masses whose interests were precisely in an inverse ratio. All the govern-

ments which still subsisted by virtue of the ancient law of nations saw themselves exposed by the principles of the revolution, which itself had no security but in treating with the enemy, or destroying him if he refused to acknowledge it.

This struggle was to decide, as by a last appeal, on the renewal of the social order of Europe. I was at the head of the great faction which would fain have destroyed the system on which the world had gone on since the time of the Romans. As such I was set up as a mark for the hatred of all who were interested in preserving their Gothic rust. A less decided character than mine might have temporised, and left a part at least of this question to be disposed of by time.

But as soon as I had sounded the two factions to the very bottom—as soon as I had perceived that they really divided the world as at the time of the reformation, I understood that there could be no compact between them, because their interests clashed too much. I understood that the more the crisis was shortened the better

for the people. It was therefore absolutely necessary that we should have the half *plus* one of Europe in order to incline the balance in our favour. I could only command this preponderance by the right of the strongest, because it is the only one acknowledged between nations. It was therefore also necessary to become the strongest; for I was not only called to govern France, but to subdue the world before her; otherwise she would have been crushed by the world.

I never had a choice in the course I pursued, for it was always commanded by events; because our danger was imminent: and the 31st March proved how far it was to be dreaded, and how impossible it was to teach the old and new systems to abide together in peace.

It was then easy to foresee that as long as there should be a parity of force between the two, there would be war, open, or disguised. Any peace that might be signed would be but to gain a breathing-time. France then, as the head-quarters of the revolution, was bound to hold herself in readi-

ness to resist the tempest. For this purpose it was requisite that there should be unity in the government, to ensure strength; union in the nation, to produce a common aim; and confidence in the people, that they might consent to the sacrifices necessary to ensure victory.

But every thing was precarious in the consular system, because nothing was in its proper sphere. There was a nominal republic, a real sovereignty; a feeble representation of the people, a strong executive power; obedient authority, and a preponderating army.

Nothing can go on well in a political system where words and things are at variance. Government debases itself by the continual fictions it must use: it falls into that kind of contempt which is felt for falsehood, because whatever is false is weak. The time is past for finessing in politics: the people are too well informed: the gazettes disclose too much. There is but one secret for governing the world; it is, Be strong: in strength there can be

neither error nor deception: it is truth naked.

I felt the weakness of my situation—the absurdity of my consulate. Something solid was required as rallying point for the revolution. I was named consul for life; It was a life-rent of superiority; insufficient in itself, because it fixed some future date, and nothing ruins confidence like the certainty of a change. But it answered for the time for which it was adopted.

Meantime, what had I gained by the truce of Amiens? I had hazarded an imprudent expedition, for which I was reproached, and justly, for it was worthless of itself.

I tried to recover San Domingo; I had good reasons for the attempt. France was too much hated by the allies to dare to remain inactive during the peace: she was forced to maintain her strength; and it was necessary to give some scope to idle curiosity. The army required to be kept constantly in motion to prevent it from falling off: besides, I was glad to try our sea forces.

For the rest, the expedition was ill conducted: wherever I was not present things went wrong. But it was much the same; it was easy to perceive that the English ministry was about to break the truce, and if we had subdued San Domingo, it would have been for them.

Every day augmented my security; when the event of the 3d Nivose shewed me that I was upon a volcano. That conspiracy was unforeseen; it was the only one with which the police had not been beforehand. There were no confidents in the business, and for that reason it succeeded.

I escaped by miracle: the interest shewn for me made up amply for the danger. The time of the conspiracy was ill chosen: nothing was ready for the Bourbons in France.

The guilty were sought for. I can say with truth that I accused only the mob-patriots*; for whenever a crime was committed, every one was disposed to give

* *Brutus du Coin*, literally, Brutuses of the Minories. The closest parallel would have been the patriots of Spa-fields.—T.

them the honour of it. I was very much astonished when the result of the enquiries proved, that the good people of Rue St. Nicaise were obliged to the royalists for blowing them up.

I fancied the royalists had been good people, because they accused us of not being so; and I believed them incapable of the boldness and the villany that such a scheme required. In fact, the project was that of a few who robbed stage-coaches; a set that was talked of and flattered, but little respected by the party.

Thus the royalists, who had been quite forgotten since the pacification of La Vendée, re-appeared on the political horizon: it was a natural consequence of the increase of my authority. I was building up royalty; it was poaching upon their grounds.

They never perceived that my monarchy had nothing to do with theirs; mine was all in fact; theirs in right: theirs was founded on custom; mine did without: it went along with the genius of the age; theirs struggled to fetter it.

The republicans were alarmed at the height to which circumstances had raised me. They dreaded the use I was to make of my power; they trembled lest I should re-establish an old-fashioned royalty by the assistance of my army. The royalists kept up these reports, and delighted to represent me as apeing their ancient monarchs: other royalists more adroitly spread abroad that I had fallen in love with the character of Monk, and that I had taken the pains to restore power, only to make a present of it to the Bourbons, when it should be worthy of their acceptance.

Weak minds, who could not fathom my strength, believed these reports. They supported the royalists, and abused me to the people, and in the army, for they began to doubt my attachment to their cause. I could not allow such an opinion to gain ground, because it tended to disunite us.

It was necessary to undeceive France, the royalists, and Europe, at any price, that they might know what to trust to. A persecution in detail against words can produce no other than bad effects, because

it does not strike at the root of evil. Besides, it is become impossible in this age of public appeal, when the exile of a woman disturbed all France.

Unfortunately for me, there happened at this very decisive moment one of those chances which destroy the best resolutions. The police discovered some little royalist plots, the source of which was beyond the Rhine; an august personage was implicated in them. All the circumstances squared in an incredible way with those which led me to strike a decided political blow. The death of the Duc d'Enghien would put the question that agitated France at rest. It would decide irrevocably as to me. I gave orders for it.

A man of great judgment, and who ought to know something of these matters, said of this murder, that it was more than a crime, that it was a fault. Begging pardon of that personage, it was a crime, and it was not a fault. I know well the value of words. The crime of the unfortunate prince was confined to a few miserable intrigues in concert with some

dowager baronesses at Strasbourg. He was playing his game. His intrigues were watched, and could neither affect my safety nor that of France. He perished, the victim of policy, and an unheard-of concatenation of circumstances.

His death was not a fault, because all the consequences I foresaw came to pass.

The war with England was renewed, because it is impossible for that country to remain long at peace. The territory of England is become too small for its population. She requires a monopoly of the four quarters of the globe to enable her to exist. War procures this monopoly, because it gives England the right of destruction at sea. It is her safeguard.

The war was languid for want of ground to fight on. England was obliged to hire some on the continent, but the harvest required time to grow. Austria had received such severe lessons, that the ministers dared not propose war so soon, however willing they might be to earn their money. Prussia was thriving in her neutrality. Russia had made a fatal trial of

war in Switzerland. Italy and Spain had entered with but little reservation into my system. The continent was at a stand.

For want of better I set about a project for invading England. I never thought of realising it, for it would have failed: not that the actual landing would have been impossible, but a retreat would have been so. There is not a single Englishman who would not have taken up arms to save the honour of his country; and the French army, left without help to their mercy, would have perished or surrendered. I made such a trial in Egypt indeed, but in London the stake was too deep.

As threats cost nothing, since I had nothing to do with my troops, it was as well to keep them in garrison on the coast as elsewhere. This demonstration obliged England to adopt a ruinous system of defence. It was so much gained.

In revenge, however, there was a conspiracy formed against me. I may give the honour of this to the emigrant princes, for it was truly royal. They had set on foot an army of conspirators, and accord-

ingly we had notice of it within twenty-four hours; so safe were the confidants.

However, as I resolved to punish men who sought to overturn the state (which is contrary to all laws divine and human) I was obliged to wait till undeniable proofs were collected before I arrested them.

Pichegru was at the head of these machinations. This man, who had more bravery than talent, wanted to act the part of Monk; he was cut out for it.

These schemes gave me little uneasiness, because I knew their aim, and that public opinion did not favour them. Though the royalists had assassinated me, they would not have been a whit nearer the mark. There is a time for all things.

I soon learnt that Moreau was implicated in the plot, and this was a delicate affair to handle, because his popularity was tremendous. It was clear that he must be gained. His reputation was too high for us to remain good neighbours. I could not be all while he was nothing. It was convenient to find a decent pretext for separating. He furnished it.

It was currently said that I was jealous of him: there was but little truth in this; but he was very jealous of me, and with reason. I esteemed him, because he was a good soldier. His friends were all those who hated me; that is to say, a great many. They would have made a hero of him, had he been put to death. I resolved to shew him as he was—a man of no character. I succeeded; absence was fatal to him; his friends forgot him, and nobody else ever cared more about him.

Less delicacy was required with regard to the other criminals. They were old hackneyed conspirators, of whom it was important to purge France for ever. We succeeded, for from that time they never re-appeared.

I was overwhelmed with petitions. All the women and children in Paris were in commotion. Every body's pardon was sued for. I had the weakness to send a few of the criminals to the state prisons, instead of allowing justice to take its course.

I even now regret this kind of indulgence,

because in a sovereign it is nothing more than a culpable weakness. He has but one duty to fulfil towards the state, that of enforcing the laws. Every compromise with crime becomes a crime in the crown. The prerogative of mercy ought never to be exerted in favour of the guilty; it should be reserved for those unfortunate persons who are absolved by conscience, though condemned by law.

Pichegru was found strangled in his bed. Of course it was said to be by my orders. I was totally ignorant concerning the matter. I cannot perceive what interest I could have had in anticipating his public execution. He was not better than the others; and I had a tribunal to judge him, and soldiers to shoot him. I never did a useless act in my life.

My authority increased because it had been threatened. Nothing in France was prepared for a counter-revolution. The public regarded the intrigues of the royalists as only calculated to bring on the horror of civil war and anarchy. The people wished at any price to avert these evils,

and rallied round me, because I promised to defend them. France sought repose under the shelter of my sword. The public voice—(history will not contradict me),—the public voice called me to the throne of France.

The republican form of government could no longer exist, because ancient monarchies will not be converted into republics. The desire of France was national greatness. To raise and sustain the edifice of national greatness, it was requisite to destroy faction, to consolidate the labours of the revolution, and to fix irrevocably the limits of the state. I alone promised France to fulfil these conditions. France called me to reign over her.

I could not become a king; the title was worn out; it excited definite and preconceived ideas; but it was important that my title, like the nature of my power, should be new. I was not the heir of the Bourbons. No common man could venture to sit on their throne. I took the name of Emperor—because it was greater, and less defined.

Never was revolution so peaceable as that which overturned the republic for which so much blood had been shed. It was because the thing was still the same; the name alone was changed. On these grounds the republicans did not dread the empire.

Besides, such revolutions as do not interfere with the interests of individuals are always peaceable.

The revolution was at length accomplished. It became inexpugnable under a permanent dynasty. The republic had only satisfied opinion; the empire guaranteed private interest as well as public opinion.

These interests were those of an immense majority, because the empire confirmed equality. Democracy, both in fact and in right, existed. Liberty alone had been restricted, because it is worse than useless in moments of danger. But liberty is of no use to any but the enlightened part of a nation; equality is valuable to all. Hence my power remained popular even amidst the reverses that overwhelmed France.

My authority did not rest, like that of

the old monarchies, upon a scaffolding of castes and subordinate ranks; it was immediate and self-dependant; for the empire consisted only of the nation and me. But in that nation all were equally called to the exercise of public functions. The point of departure was no obstacle. A disposition upwards was universal in the state, and in this disposition consisted my strength.

I did not invent this system; it arose out of the ruins of the Bastile. It is the result of the moral civilization which time has wrought in Europe; all attempts to destroy it will be vain: it will be maintained by the nature of things, because practice will always ultimately be found to conform to power. Now power was taken out of the hands of the nobility from the moment they had permitted the third estate to carry arms, from the moment they had declined serving as the sole militia of the state.

Power had abandoned the clergy from the time when, by beginning to reason, the people had become virtually protestants.

Power had abandoned government precisely because the nobility and clergy were disabled from fulfilling their offices, that is to say, because they could no longer support the throne. Routine and prejudice had also lost their power, because routine and prejudice had been unmasked before the people.

The social compact was dissolved long before the revolution, because things and words had ceased to coincide.

The downfal of prejudice had laid bare the sources of power; its weakness was discovered; it fell on the first assault.

Authority was therefore to be built up again upon a new plan. The whole train of habits and prejudices were to be passed over: that mental blindness, called faith, was to be of no avail. There were no inherited rights, but every thing was to rest upon fact—that is, power.

Thus I did not mount the throne like the heir of an ancient dynasty, to sit there luxuriously under the shadow of habit and illusion: but I placed myself there to execute the institutions willed by the people;

to wield the law under the sanction of moral right; and to render France formidable, in order to maintain her independence.

The opportunity was soon afforded. England was tired of seeing my troops upon the coast. She resolved to get rid of them, and, purse in hand, she sought allies on the continent. She could not fail to find them.

The ancient dynasties were appalled at seeing me on the throne. Whatever civilities might pass between us, it was too clear that I was not one of them; for I reigned by virtue of a system which must break down the altar time had consecrated to them. I was of myself a revolution. The empire was not less dreadful to them than the republic: in fact they feared it more—for it was more healthy.

It was policy to attack me as soon as possible, before I attained to my full strength.

The chances of the struggle about to take place were of the last importance to me. I was to learn the very measure of

the hatred I inspired. I was to learn which were the sovereigns whom fear would force to fall in with the system of the empire, and which of them would perish rather than tamper with it.

This struggle could not but lead to new political combinations in Europe. I was to fall, or to become its master.

I had just annexed Piedmont to France, because it was necessary that Lombardy should be dependant on the empire. The cry was raised against ambition; the lists were prepared for the fight; the act of annexation was the signal for it.

The battle could not fail of being obstinate. The Austrians assembled all their forces, and the Russians were determined to join with all theirs.

The young Alexander had just ascended the throne: as children like to do the contrary of what their fathers have done, he declared war against me, because his father had made peace. For we had as yet no quarrel with the Russians; but the women and the courtiers had settled the matter. They thought they were only acting in good

taste, because I was not the fashion in the great world; while, unconsciously, they were laying the foundations of the system to which Russia will one day owe her greatness.

The coalition never opened a campaign more awkwardly. The Austrians fancied they could take me by surprise, but their scheme was unsuccessful.

They overran Bavaria without waiting for the Russians; by forced marches they reached the Rhine. My columns had quitted the camp of Boulogne; they were marching through France; we crossed the Rhine at Strasbourg. My advanced guard met the Austrians at Ulm, and routed them. I marched upon Vienna by the high road; I entered it without an obstacle. An Austrian general had forgotten to destroy the bridges over the Danube. I crossed the river; I should have done so at all events, but I was the sooner in Moravia.

The Russians were but just coming up: the wreck of the Austrians sought safety under their banners. The enemy attempted to

make a stand at Austerlitz,—he was beaten. The Russians retired in good order, and left me the empire of Austria.

The Emperor Francis demanded an interview; I granted him one in a ditch. He sued for peace—I gave it him; for what could I have made of his dominions? they were not moulded for the revolution. But, to weaken him, I demanded Venice for Lombardy, and the Tyrol for Bavaria, that I might reward my friends at the expense of my enemies,—it was the least I could do.

It was, however, not a time to dispute; peace was signed. I proposed the same terms to the Russians: Alexander refused them.

This was noble: for by accepting peace he would have accepted the humiliation of Austria.

By refusing he shewed firmness under calamity, and confidence in fortune. The refusal itself taught me that the fate of the world would depend on us two.

The campaign was renewed: I followed the Russians in their retreat. A new theatre

opened itself to our arms. I was going to see the old ground of anarchy and of liberty bent under the yoke of a stranger: the Poles only waited my arrival in order to throw it off.

The greatest error I committed during my reign was neglecting the advantages I might have derived from the Poles. Nevertheless I perceived the importance of restoring Poland, that it might be a barrier against Russia, and counter-balance Austria; but circumstances were not at that time favourable for realising such a plan.

Besides, the Poles did not appear to me fit for my designs. They are an enthusiastic but frivolous people. They do every thing from fancy—nothing from design: their enthusiasm is strong, but they can neither regulate nor prolong it. The nation bears about its ruin in its character.

Perhaps by giving the Poles a plan, a system, a fixed object, they might have formed themselves in time.

Although my disposition was not to do things by halves, I did no more in Poland,—and I repented it. I advanced

in the midst of winter towards the north; the climate did not at all alarm the soldiers; their moral state was excellent. I had to fight an army, master of its own ground, and in its own climate. It awaited me on the frontiers of Russia; I pursued it there, that my troops might not languish and waste in wretched cantonments. I met the enemy at Eylau: the affair was bloody and indecisive.

If the Russians had attacked us the next day, we should have been beaten; but happily their generals are seldom inspired. They gave me time to attack them at Friedland,—victory was less doubtful. Alexander had defended himself valiantly, —he proposed peace. It was honourable to both nations, for they had struggled with equal bravery. Peace was signed at Tilsit; it was in the spirit of good faith: I attest the Czar himself.

Such was the issue of the first efforts of the coalition against the empire I had just founded. It raised the glory of our arms, but it left the question undecided between Europe and me, for our enemies had only

been humbled; they were neither destroyed nor changed. We were at the point whence we set out; and when I signed the articles of peace, I foresaw a new war.

War was inevitable as long as the chances brought about no new combinations, and as long as England should have a personal interest in prolonging it.

But it was important to make use of the temporary tranquillity I had restored on the continent, to enlarge the basis of my empire, that it might be possessed of sufficient solidity to resist a future attack. The throne was hereditary in my family, which thus began a new dynasty, that time, which has legitimated so many others, might consecrate. From the days of Charlemagne no crown had been bestowed with equal solemnity. I had received it with the consent of the people and the sanction of the church: my family, called to the throne, could not remain mingled among the ordinary classes of society—it would have been an incongruity.

I was rich in conquests. It was requisite to unite these states intimately with

the system of the empire, in order to increase its preponderance. There are no bonds between nations but those of common interest. Therefore a community of interests between us and the conquered countries was absolutely necessary. To accomplish this end, I had only to assimilate their ancient social constitution to ours, and to place at the head of these new institutions rulers interested in keeping them up.

I answered these purposes by placing my family on the vacant thrones.

Lombardy was the most important of these states, because the house of Austria must for ever regret it, and it was too near to be forgotten. I did not choose to do it the favour of placing one of my brothers on its throne. I alone was able to bear the iron crown, and I put it upon my head.

By this measure I gave confidence to the Lombards, for by it I took their affairs into my own hands.

The new state received the name of the kingdom of Italy, because the title was

greater, and spoke more directly to the imagination of the Italians.

The throne of Naples was vacant. Queen Caroline, after having deluged the streets of Naples with blood, and given up the kingdom to the English, had been driven out a second time. That unhappy country needed a master to save it from anarchy and from the effects of revenge. One of my brothers ascended the throne.

Holland had long lost the energy which constitutes a republic. She had no longer sufficient strength to play the part. There had been proofs of this, at the time of the invasion in 99. I had no reason to suspect that the Prince of Orange was regretted, from the manner in which he had been treated. Holland, then, seemed to need a sovereign. I gave her another of my brothers.

The youngest was young enough to wait. The fourth had no desire for a crown; he had fled to avoid one.

No republic remained but Switzerland. It was not worth while to change the form to which its people were accustomed. The

only use I made of my authority in that country was to prevent their cutting each other's throats. They were not particularly grateful.

But while thus forming states in alliance with France, and dependant on the empire, it became necessary to incorporate with the mother country other portions of territory, in order to preserve its preponderance in the system.

For this reason I joined Piedmont to France, and not to Italy. I also added to it Genoa and Parma. These additions were worthless in themselves, for I might have made good Italians of these people; they became but sorry Frenchmen. But the empire did not consist of France alone, but of the family estates, and of foreign allies. It was essential to keep a certain proportion between these elements. Every new alliance required a new annexation. At every step the people raised the cry of ambition. But my ambition did not consist in wishing for a few square leagues, more or less, of land, but in the triumph of my cause.

Now this cause consisted not solely in opinion, but in the weight that either party could place in the balance, and these square leagues were of consequence in the scale, because the world is made up of such.

Thus I augmented the mass of power that I set in motion. It required neither talent nor address to bring about these changes. An act of my will sufficed; for these nations were too petty to have one of their own when I appeared. They depended on the momentum given to the aggregate of the imperial system. The radiating point of that system was France.

My work required consolidation by giving France new institutions conformable to the new social order she had adopted. The age was to be created anew for me, as I had been for it.

I had to become a legislator, after having been a warrior.

It was not possible to make the revolution retrace its steps; for that would have been making the strong submit anew to the weak, which is unnatural. I had,

therefore, to seize the spirit of the times, and to form an analogous system of legislation. I think I succeeded—the system will survive me; and I have left Europe an inheritance which she can never now alienate.

There was in fact nothing in the state but a huge democracy, swayed by a dictator. This kind of government is convenient as to the executive part; but its nature is temporary, because power is but a life rent in the hands of a dictator. I sought to make it perpetual, by lasting institutions and corporations for life, that I might place them between the throne and the democracy. I could do nothing with the old implements of custom and delusion. I was obliged to create every thing anew by realities.

Thus I was forced to found my legislature upon the immediate interests of the majority, and to create my corporations by that interest, because interest is of all earthly things the most real and durable.

I made laws, the activity of which was stupendous, but uniform. Their principle

was to maintain equality. This is so strongly impressed upon my code, that it of itself will suffice to preserve it.

I instituted an intermediate caste. It was democratical, because it was open always and to all; it was monarchical, because it could not die out.

This body was to perform that part in the new system which the nobility had acted in the old; that is, to support the throne. But it resembled it in nothing. The old nobility existed entirely by privilege. Mine had nothing but power. The old nobility had no merit but that of being exclusive. Every man who had distinguished himself had a right to belong to the new: it was in fact only a civic crown. The people attached no other idea to it. Every member had deserved it by his actions; every man might obtain it at the same price; it was offensive to none.

The spirit of empire was the main spring of action; it is the characteristic of revolutions. It agitated the whole nation. It appeared almost in a state of conspiracy,

that it might rise. I held out great rewards to this extraordinary activity; they were bestowed by public gratitude. The highest honours were still conformable to the spirit of equality; for the meanest soldier might obtain them by a brilliant action.

After the confusion of the republic, it was of consequence to re-establish good order, because it is the sign of strength and durability.

Ministers and judges were essential to the state, because on them alone the maintenance of good order, that is, in other words, the execution of the laws depend. I included them in the movements of the people and the army. I included them also in the same system of rewards. I erected an order which should confer distinction upon ministers; because it had received the brevet of honour from the soldiers. I made it common to all the servants of the public, because the first of virtues is devotion to one's country.

Thus I converted the spring of empire into a general bond; which united all the

classes in the nation by a mutual interest; for no class was subordinate, no class was exclusive. An intermediate body, culled from the flower of the nation, formed around me. It was attached to the imperial system by its avocations, its interests, and its opinions. This numerous body, although invested with the civil and military power, was acknowledged by the people, because it was chosen from among themselves. They confided in it, because their interests were the same with its own. This body was neither oppressive nor exclusive. It was in reality a magistracy.

The empire rested on a vigorous organization. The army had been formed in the school of war, where it had learned to fight and to suffer.

The civil magistrates had accustomed themselves to a strict execution of the laws, because I forbad either compromise or explanation. Thus they became possessed of practice and dispatch. I had given a regular and uniform impulse, because there was but one watch-word throughout the empire. Thus every spring

in the machine was in motion, but the movements took place only within the bounds I had assigned.

I put a stop to public dilapidation by making one central point for all exchequer business. I left nothing vague in this department; because every thing should be clear with regard to money. I left nothing in the power of the demi-responsible provincial officers, because I had found, by experience, that such a plan serves only to enrich a few petty peculators at the expense of the treasury, the people, and the government.

I redeemed public credit by taking nothing on credit.

For the system of loans, which had ruined France, I substituted that of taxation, which has supported it.

I organised the conscription—a severe but grand law, and well worthy of a people which cherishes its glory and its liberty, for it should entrust its defence to none but itself.

I opened new channels of commerce. I joined Italy to France by cutting through

the Alps in four different places. The works of that kind, which I undertook, appear almost impossible.

I caused agriculture to prosper by maintaining the laws which protect private property, and by distributing the public burdens equally.

I added great monuments to those already possessed by France. They were to be the memorials of its glory. I thought they would ennoble the minds of our descendants. The people become attached to these proud land-marks of their history.

My throne shone only with the lustre of arms. The French love grandeur even in its outward show. I caused palaces to be decorated. I assembled a numerous court: I gave it a character of austerity, for any other would have been incongruous. There were no amusements at my court. Therefore women played but an insignificant part, where every thing was consecrated to the state. Indeed they always detested me for that reason. Louis XV. suited them much better.

My great work was hardly sketched out

when a new enemy appeared unexpectedly in the lists.

Prussia had remained at peace for ten years; France had been grateful for it; the allies were enraged at it: they had abused her, but she had prospered.

Her neutrality had been of peculiar importance to me during the last campaign; to secure it I had made some overtures respecting a cession of Hanover. I thought such an offer amply compensated for a small violation of territory which I had permitted myself, in order to accelerate the march of a division which I was in haste to get to the Danube.

England had rejected the proposals for peace which we had transmitted to her according to our custom, when we signed the treaty of Tilsit. Prussia demanded the cession of Hanover.

I asked no better than to bestow such a boon upon her; but I thought it high time for her court to declare itself frankly for us, by embracing our system in good earnest. We could not do every thing by the sword; policy owed us some allies;

and this appeared a fair opportunity for gaining one.

But I perceived that Prussia had no such intentions, and that she thought I was amply repaid by her neutrality. It therefore became absurd to aggrandise a country I could not depend upon. I was out of humour; and did not calculate sufficiently that, by giving territory to Prussia, I should compromise her, that is, make sure of her. I refused every thing, and Hanover was otherwise disposed of.

The Prussians complained loudly because I would not give them the property of another. They murmured at the slight violation of their territory the preceding year. They suddenly found out that they were the guardians of the glory of Frederick the Great; they grew warm. A sort of national tumult agitated the nobility; England hastened to subsidize them, and their movements acquired consistency.

If the Prussians had attacked me while I was at war with Russia, they might have done me a serious injury; but it was so absurd to come, right or wrong, and de-

clare war against us, more in the manner of a school-boy's rebellion than any thing else, that it was some time before I could credit it.

Nothing was, however, more true; and we were again obliged to take the field.

I certainly expected to beat the Prussians; but I thought it would take more time. I took measures against such aggressions as I suspected might be made against me in other quarters; but I found them unnecessary.

By a singular chance, the Prussians did not hold out two hours. By another accident their generals had never thought of defending places that might have held out three months. I was master of the country in a few days.

The celerity of this overthrow proved to me, that the war had not been popular in Prussia. I ought to have profited by this discovery, and to have organized Prussia after our own plans; but I did not know how to set about it.

The Empire had acquired an immense preponderance by the battle of Jena. The

public began to look upon my cause as won: I perceived it by the change of measures towards me: I began to believe the same thing myself; and this opinion made me commit some errors.

The system on which I had founded the empire was innately at variance with all the ancient dynasties. I knew that there must be mortal strife between them and me. Vigorous means were therefore to be taken to shorten it as much as possible, in order to gain the suffrages of kings and nations.

On the one hand I should have changed the form and personal government of all the states that war placed at my disposal, because revolutions are not brought about by keeping the same men and the same measures. I was certain, by the very act of maintaining those governments, of having them always against me: it was recalling my enemies to life.

If, on the other hand, I chose to retain the old governments for want of better, I ought to have made them accomplices in my greatness, by forcing them to accept

of titles and territory together with my alliance.

By following either of these plans, according to circumstances, I should have extended the frontiers of the revolution rapidly. Our alliances would have been solid, because they would have been made with the people: I should have bestowed on them the advantages, together with the principles, of the revolution: I should have removed the scourge of war which had afflicted them for twenty years, and which ended by raising them all against us.

It is most probable that the majority of the nations of the continent would have accepted this grand alliance, and Europe would have been recast on a new plan analogous to the state of her civilization.

I reasoned well, but my practice was contrary to my reasoning. Instead of changing the Prussian dynasty, as I had threatened, I restored their estates, after having parcelled them out. Poland was not pleased, because I did not free the portion of her territory that Prussia had seized. The kingdom of Westphalia was

discontented at not obtaining more; and Prussia, enraged at what I had taken away, vowed eternal hatred towards me.

I fancied, I know not why, that kings dispossessed by the right of conquest, might become grateful for any part of their dominions that might be left them. I fancied that they might, after all their reverses, become sincere allies, because it was safest to do so. I fancied that I might thus extend the connexions of the empire without taking on myself the odium of revolution. I thought there was something noble in taking away and restoring crowns. I allowed myself to be seduced by it. I was mistaken, and such faults can never be repaired.

I tried at least to correct what I had done in Prussia, by organising the confederation of the Rhine, because I hoped to keep one in check by the other. To form this confederation, I aggrandised the states of some sovereigns, at the expense of those of a rabble of petty princes, who answered no end but that of dissipating the money of their subjects, without doing them any

good. I thus attached to my cause the sovereigns whose power I had enlarged, by the very interest of their aggrandizement. I made them conquerors in spite of themselves. But they found the trade agree with them. They were sufficiently willing to make common cause with me, and they were faithful to that cause as long as it was possible.

The continent was thus at peace for the fourth time. I had extended the surface and the weight of the Empire. My immediate power extended from the Adriatic to the mouths of the Weser: my power over opinion throughout all Europe.

But Europe felt, as I did, that this pacification was only a provisional work; because there were too many resisting elements, and that in treating with these resistances, which I was in the wrong to do, I had only put off the evil day.

England was the vital principle of resistance. I had no means of attacking it hand to hand, and I was sure that the continental war would be perpetually renewed as long as the English ministry had where-

with to pay its expenses. This might last a good while, as the profits of the war would feed the war. It was a vicious circle, the result of which must be the ruin of the Continent. A means was therefore to be devised for destroying the profits which England derived from maritime war, in order to ruin the credit of the English ministry. To this end the continental system was proposed to me. I thought it good, and adopted it. Few people understood that system; they determined to see nothing in it but a scheme to raise the price of coffee. Its design was widely different.

It was to have ruined the trade of England. But in that it failed of its purpose, because it, like other prohibitions, produced increased prices, which are always favourable to commerce; and because it could not be so complete as to prevent a contraband trade.

But the continental system was also to answer the purpose of plainly marking out our friends and foes. There could be no deception here.—Attachment to the con-

tinental system betokened attachment to our cause, because that system was at once our banner and palladium.

This contested system was indispensable at the time I adopted it; for a great empire must not only have a general tendency to direct its policy, but its economy ought to have a parallel direction. Industry must have a vent like every thing else, in order to act and to advance. Now France had none at the time I opened one by establishing the continental system.

Before the Revolution, the economy of France had been turned towards the colonies, and exchange. It was the fashion of the day. It had great success. But however much that success might be extolled, its only consequence was the ruin of the state finance, the destruction of public credit, the overthrow of the military system, the loss of all respect abroad, and the ruin of agriculture. And finally, these successes had led France to sign a treaty of commerce, which made her dependant on England for supplies.

France, indeed, possessed fine sea-

ports, and some merchants of enormous fortune.

The maritime system had been completely destroyed by the war; the sea-ports were ruined: no human power could restore to them what the revolution had annihilated. It therefore required a fresh impulse to be given to the spirit of trade, in order to revive the domestic industry of France. The only means to accomplish this was to deprive England of the monopoly of manufactures, to create a manufacturing interest, and to include it in the general economy of the state. I was forced to create the continental system.

Nothing less than this system could avail, because the manufactures required an enormous premium to induce capitalists to advance the sums necessary for the establishment of the whole manufactories of a country.

The event was in my favour; I removed the seat of industry, and made it cross the sea. It has made such rapid strides on the Continent, that it has now nothing to fear. If France wishes to thrive, let her

keep my system, and change its name; if she chooses to fall off, let her engage in maritime pursuits, which the English will destroy the first time they go to war. I was forced to carry the continental system to extremities, because I had in view not only the good of France, but the annoyance of England. We could receive colonial produce only through her, whatever flag might be borrowed for the occasion, therefore we received as little as possible. There was no better way of doing this than raising the prices to an extravagant height. The political end was fulfilled; the exchequer gained by it, but it drove the old women to despair, and they have had their revenge. Daily experience proved the expediency of the continental system, for the state flourished in spite of the burden of the war. The taxes were entire; public credit was equal to the interest of money; the spirit of improvement appeared in agriculture as well as manufactures; country villages, not less than the streets of Paris, were rebuilt; roads and canals encouraged the industry of the interior; some new

improvement appeared weekly: I made sugar from turnips, and soda from salt. The developement of science kept pace with industry.

It would have been folly to depart from a system at the very moment when it was producing its fruits. It required to be strengthened rather, that it might have a greater hold on commercial emulation.

This influenced the policy of Europe, inasmuch as it obliged England to carry on the war. From that moment the war assumed a serious character in England; it threatened the fortune of the public, that is, its very existence. It became popular. The English ceased to commit their defence to foreign auxiliaries; they took it upon themselves, and appeared on the Continent in large bodies. The struggle had never been perilous till then. I foresaw it when I signed the decree. I suspected that all repose was at an end for me, and that my life would be spent in wrestling with obstacles which the public had lost sight of, but of which I possessed the secret, because I am the only man whom appear-

ances never deceived. In my heart I flattered myself that I should be master of the future, by means of the army I had formed, so invincible did success seem to have made it. It never doubted of victory; it was easily moved, because we had exploded the system of camps and magazines. It could be transported in any direction at a moment's warning; and wherever it arrived it felt a conscious superiority. With such soldiers, where is the general who would not have loved glory? I loved it, I own; and yet, since the battle of Jena I had never felt that plenitude of confidence, that contempt of consequences, to which I owed my first successes. I distrusted myself; that distrust made me uncertain in my decisions: my temper was ruffled, my character lowered. I did command myself, but what is not natural is never perfect.

The continental system had determined the English to war with us even to the death. The North was subdued and overawed by my garrisons. The English had no connection with it but in smuggling; but Portugal had been given up to them;

and I knew that Spain, under the mask of neutrality, favoured her commerce.

But that the continental system should be of real use, it required to be complete. I had nearly accomplished it in the north; it was of consequence to cause it to be respected in the south. I demanded a passage through Spain for a division of troops I wanted to send into Portugal. It was granted. At the approach of my troops the court of Lisbon embarked for the Brazils, and left me its kingdom. I required a military road through Spain to communicate with Portugal. This road connected us with Spain. Till then I had never thought of that country, on account of its inefficiency.

The political state of Spain was at that time alarming; it was governed by the most incapable of sovereigns: a brave and worthy man, whose energies went no farther than to secure implicit obedience to the favourite. The favourite, without character and without talents, had neither pursuit nor energy, but what were employed in incessant demands for titles and riches.

The favourite was devoted to me, because he found it convenient to govern under the shadow of an alliance with me. But he had conducted affairs so ill, that his credit had sunk in Spain. He could no longer command obedience. His devotion became unavailing.

Public opinion in Spain had been proceeding in a line contrary to that of the rest of Europe. The people, which every where else had risen to the level of the revolution, had remained here far beneath it; enlightened notions had not even penetrated to the second layer of the nation. They had remained on the surface; that is, they were confined to the highest classes.—These felt the degradation of their country, and blushed to obey a government which was debasing their native land. They were called the Liberales.

Thus the revolutionists in Spain were those who might lose by a revolution; and those who had all to gain would not hear of it. The same incongruity operated at Naples. It made me commit many errors,

because I was not then possessed of the key to the mystery.

The presence of my troops in Spain was an event. Every body set about interpreting it. People were occupied by it. Some fermentation appeared. I soon learned it. The liberales were sensible of the humiliation of their country; they thought to prevent its ruin by a conspiracy: the conspiracy succeeded.

It went no further than forcing the old king to abdicate, and punishing his favourite. Spain was no gainer by the exchange, for the son they placed on the throne was no better than the father. I am well informed at least on that head.

The conspiracy had scarcely succeeded, when the conspirators took fright at their own daring. They were afraid of themselves, of me, of every body. The monks disapproved of the violence committed against their old king, because it was illegitimate. I disapproved of it no less, but for a different reason. Fear took possession of the new court; the spirit of

revolt seized the people, and anarchy the state.

The natural course of things had thus brought about a change in Spain; a revolution in fact was begun. It could not be of the same nature as that in France, because it was composed of different elements. But till then it had no direction, because it had neither chief nor partizan beforehand. It was as yet only a suspension of authority; a subversion of power; in short, disorder.

There was nothing to be predicted concerning Spain, but that with so ignorant and fierce a people a revolution could not be accomplished without torrents of blood and a long series of calamity.

But what was the end proposed by those who wished for a change in Spain? It was not a revolution like ours: it was an efficient government: a rational authority which might remove the rust which obscured their country, and restore it to consideration abroad, and civilization at home.

I was able to give them both, by making myself master of their revolution at the

point to which they had brought it. The object was to give Spain a dynasty, which should be strong because it was new, and enlightened because it should bring with it no prejudices. Mine combined these qualities. I therefore resolved to bestow this crown also upon it.

The most difficult step towards this end was taken—that of getting rid of the old dynasty. Now the Spaniards had allowed their old king to be forced to abdicate the crown, and they would not acknowledge the new one. Every thing therefore seemed to promise, that in order to avoid anarchy, Spain would be glad to accept a sovereign armed with a prodigious power. By that means it would have easily stept into the imperial circle; and however deplorable the social state of Spain might be, it was a conquest not to be neglected.

As, in order to form a just idea of things, one should see them one's self, I set out for Bayonne; to which place I had invited the old Spanish court. As it had nothing better to do, it came. I had also invited the new court. I really did not expect it

to arrive, because it had something much better to do.

I had calculated, that to prevent Ferdinand from meeting either his father or me, they would have led him to revolt, or engaged him to go to America. But he did neither, but came to Bayonne with his tutor and courtiers, leaving Spain to the first comer.

This single step gave me the measure of the court. I had scarce spoken to the heads of the conspiracy, when I perceived their total ignorance of their real situation. They were prepared for nothing, therefore saw nothing; their policy seemed like the blind leading the blind *. I had scarcely seen the king they had set upon the throne before I was satisfied that Spain ought not to be left in such hands.

I then resolved to accept the abdication of this family, and to place one of my brothers on the throne now abandoned by its old possessors; they had descended

* Ils menaient leur politique comme les *quinze vingt*, i. e. the inhabitants of the asylum for the blind so named.

from it so easily, that I thought he might mount it with as little difficulty.

In fact, nothing seemed to oppose it; the Junta of Bayonne had acknowledged him; no legal power remained in Spain to refuse the change; the old king seemed grateful to me for taking the throne from his son, and had retired quietly to repose himself at Compiegne. His son was conducted to the castle of Valençay, where all necessary preparations had been made for his reception.

The Spaniards knew exactly what they had parted with in their old king; he left behind him neither regret nor remembrance; but the son was yet young; his reign had been hoped for. He was unfortunate; they converted him into a hero: imagination exerted itself in his favour. The Liberales clamoured for national independence; the monks talked of legitimacy: the whole nation armed itself under these two pretexts.

I confess I was wrong to shut up the young king at Valençay. I ought to have allowed him to shew himself, in order to

undeceive those who took an interest in him.

I was especially in the wrong not to let him stay upon the throne. Things would have grown worse and worse in Spain. I should have acquired the title of protector of the old king, by giving him an asylum. The new government could not have failed to commit itself with England. I should have declared war both on my own account, and as plenipotentiary for the old king. Spain would have trusted her army to fight her battles, and as soon as I had beaten it, the nation must have submitted to the right of conquest. It would not even have dreamed of murmuring, because in disposing of a conquered country one only follows established customs.

If I had been more patient I should have followed this plan, but I thought that the result being the same, the Spaniards would accept beforehand a change of dynasty which the state of affairs rendered inevitable. I managed this affair awkwardly, because I passed over the regular

gradations. I had displaced the ancient race of kings in a way offensive to the Spaniards. Their wounded pride would not acknowledge the race I had put in its stead. The result was, that there was no authority any where, or rather it was every where. The whole nation fancied itself called upon to defend the state, since there was neither army nor authority to which that defence could be committed. Each man took the responsibility on himself; I had created anarchy, and found all the resources it can furnish turned against me. The whole nation fell upon me.

The Spanish nation, whose history records nothing but acts of avarice and ferocity, was not formidable face to face with an enemy. Its people fled at the very sight of our soldiers, but they stabbed them in the back. They were exasperated, and used reprisals. One reprisal caused a second, and the war became a tissue of atrocity.

I felt that it gave a character of violence to my reign. That it was an example

dangerous to the people, and fatal to the army; because it consumed the men and fatigued the soldiers.

I felt that I had begun ill; but when once a war was fairly entered upon, it was impossible to abandon it: for the very smallest reverse gave spirit to my enemies, and all Europe instantly got under arms. I was obliged to be always victorious.

It was not long before I was put to trial.

I had gone to Spain in order to accelerate events, and to examine the ground on which I had to leave my brother. I had occupied Madrid, and destroyed the English army which was advancing to its relief. My success was rapid: terror was at its height; resistance seemed about to cease; there was not an instant to lose; neither was any time lost. The English ministry armed Austria. They were always as active in raising enemies as I could be in beating them.

This time the intrigues of Austria were skilfully conducted; they took me by surprise. I must give praise where it is due.

My troops were scattered at Naples, at

Madrid, at Hamburg. I myself was in Spain. It was probable that the Austrians might have been successful in the first instance. This success might have led to more, for in these cases the first step is usually the difficulty. They might have tempted Prussia and Russia; re-animated the courage of the Spaniards, and restored popularity to the English ministry.

The court of Vienna maintains a tenacious policy, that is never disconcerted by passing events. It was long before I discovered the reason. I perceived, a little too late, indeed, that this policy was so deeply rooted, only because the good nature of the government had allowed the state to degenerate into an oligarchy. The country is led by about a hundred noblemen: they possess the soil, and have seized upon the exchequer, the cabinet, and the army, by which means they are the real rulers, and have left to the court no more than the honour of the signature.

Now oligarchies never change their opinions, because their interest is always the same. They do every thing ill; but they

always continue doing, because they cannot die out. They never succeed; but they support reverses admirably, because they support them in concert.

Austria has owed her safety four times to this form of government: it decided for the war she had just declared against me.

I had not a moment to lose. I left Spain abruptly, and flew to the Rhine. I got together the troops nearest at hand: Prince Eugene had allowed himself to be beaten in Italy: I sent him some reinforcements. The kings of Swabia and Bavaria lent me their troops; with them I beat the Austrians at Ratisbon, and marched towards Vienna.

I advanced by forced marches along the right bank of the Danube; I depended on the viceroy to secure our junction. I intended to get before the Austrians to Vienna, to cross the Danube there, and to take up a position to receive the archduke.

This plan was well conceived; but it was imprudent, because I had to cope with a man of talent, and because I had not

enough troops. But fortune was then on my side.

In return, the archduke made a very able movement: he divined my object, and gained upon me. He threw himself rapidly upon Vienna by the left bank of the Danube, and took up his position at the same time with me. As far as I know, this is the only able movement the Austrians ever made.

My plan had failed: I was in presence of a formidable army: it commanded my movements, and forced me to remain inactive. Nothing now but a great battle could put an end to the war. It was my business to attack; the archduke had given me that part to play: it was not easy; for he was in a position to receive me.

By an unhoped for piece of good fortune, the archduke John, who should, at all hazards, have kept back the viceroy, allowed himself to be beaten. The army of Italy drove him from the other side of the Danube, and we gained the assistance of its right wing.

But as we could not remain there for

ever, we were obliged to come to action. I caused pontoons to be thrown across the river. The army began to move. Marshal Massena's division was the first that crossed; he began his fire, when an accident carried away the pontoons. It was impossible to replace them in time to sustain him: he was attacked by the whole hostile army. The division maintained its ground with valour which might be called heroic, for it was hopeless. Their ammunition had failed: they were on the point of destruction—when the Austrians ceased firing, thinking that sufficient to the day was the evil thereof. They recovered their position at a decisive moment, and delivered me from the most cruel anxiety.

Nevertheless, we had sustained a reverse of fortune: I perceived it by the state of public opinion. My defeat was published; the details were repeated; my fall was foretold. The Tyrolese had revolted: we had been obliged to send the Bavarian army to that country. Parties had taken up arms in Prussia and Westphalia, and

spread themselves over the country, in order to excite revolt. The English undertook an expedition against Antwerp, which might have succeeded, but for their own folly. My situation grew daily worse.

At length I succeeded in throwing fresh bridges over the Danube. The army crossed the river during a dreadful night. I was present at the crossing, for I was uneasy about it. It answered completely; our columns had time to form, and that great day arose with happy omens.

The battle was grand; for it was well disputed. But the generals did not make any great efforts of genius, because they commanded large masses upon a flat plain. It was long doubtful. The intrepidity of our troops, and the bold manœuvre of Macdonald, decided the fortune of the day.

Once broken, the Austrian army marched off in disorder, by a long plain, on which it lost a great many men. I pursued them vigorously, because I wished to decide the campaign. Beaten in Moravia,

there was no resource but to sue for peace, and I granted it to them for the fourth time.

I trusted that it would be lasting, because people get tired of being beaten, as they do of every thing else; and because there was a considerable party in Vienna, who argued in favour of a final alliance with the empire.

I wished for peace, because I felt the expediency of giving some respite to the people: for, instead of feeling the advantages of the revolution, they had as yet seen only its horrors. We were no longer protectors, as at the beginning of the war; and in order to accustom the public opinion of Europe to the nature of my power, it was not politic to shew it always in its hostile aspect.

The enemy's party assured the populace that they were only arming to deliver them from the evils of war, and to lower the price of English goods.

These insinuations made proselytes. The war diminished the popularity of the revolution. Therefore I desired peace; but it

was necessary to obtain the consent of the English ministry: Austria undertook to ask it. They refused.

This refusal gave me great anxiety. England must have felt within herself resources which I could not comprehend. I endeavoured to discover what these were, but in vain.

Instead of laying down my arms, I was forced to keep up my war establishment, and to weary all Europe. I was so much the more annoyed at it, as the allies had all the honour of the war, though I had the success. For they had the innocent air of defending those things that are called legitimate, because they are old. I, on the other hand, appeared the aggressor, because I fought to destroy these, and to set up what was new. The whole weight of the accusation lay on me.

Yet the war of the revolution was but the result of the situation of Europe. It was the crisis which changed its manners. It was the inevitable consequence of the transit from one social system to another. If I had been the inventor of the system,

I should have been guilty of the evils it brought about. But it was invented by nobody. It was produced by the current of the times. This current had silently made way for the Revolution, as it had done for the Reformation, and the evils that followed upon it. War depended no more upon me than upon the allies. It depended on the nature which the Almighty has impressed upon human beings.

England continued the war without auxiliaries, but not without allies, for every enemy to revolution was such. We had an open field to fight on in Spain. I sent back my troops there, but I did not go back myself. I was wrong: because nobody does one's business so well as one's self. But I was tired of all this commotion; and I, from that time, began to meditate a project that might give a new character to my reign.

But before I could accomplish this, the enemy embarrassed me in a quarter from which I had no apprehension. The north was occupied by my troops. The English were not strong enough to attack me in

27242

that point. It was in the Mediterranean that their navy ensured them superiority. They possessed Malta, and commanded Sicily, the shores of Spain, Africa, and Greece. They sought to profit by all these advantages.

They endeavoured to excite a re-action in Italy, and convert it, if possible, into a second Spain. There were discontented persons every where, for I had not been able to give every body their ancient rights, combined with the advantages of the new system. There were such in Italy as well as elsewhere. The clergy had no affection for me, because my reign had put an end to theirs. The devotees followed their example, and detested me. The rabble partook of the same feelings, because the clergy are still possessed of influence in Italy. The head quarters of this opposition was Rome, as it was the only town in Italy where it could hope to escape my observation. Thence it held communications with the English; it instigated to revolt; it insulted me in anonymous pamphlets; it promulgated false

reports. It procured recruits for England; it kept in pay the banditti of Cardinal Ruffa, for the purpose of assassinating Frenchmen; it attempted to blow up the palace of the minister of police at Naples. It was clear that the English had a plot upon Italy, and that they fomented these disturbances.

I could not permit this; I could not suffer the French to be insulted and murdered. I contented myself, however, with making complaints at various times to the Holy See. I received civil answers to beg I would take the thing patiently. As my temper was never very patient, I saw that there was a decided hostility against us, and that I must outstrip it to prevent its exploding.—I occupied Rome with my troops.

Instead of allaying the effervescence, this measure, which was perhaps a little violent, irritated the public. It however secured the tranquillity of Italy, and quashed the schemes of Lord W. Bentinck. But, in secret, the whole class of devotees did every thing that hatred and the spirit of the church could inspire against me.

This centre of conspiracy had ramifications in France and Switzerland. The clergy, the malcontents, the partizans of the old order of things (for there were still such) had united to intrigue against my authority, and to do me every possible injury. They no longer appeared as conspirators; they had borrowed the standard of the church, and they used its thunders instead of cannon. It was their watch-word and their war-cry. It was a sort of orthodox free-masonry, which I could not lay hold on at any given point, because it pervaded all places.

Besides, it was difficult to attack these people in detail, because it would have been a persecution; but that is the business of the weak, not of the strong. I thought I could disperse the party by an alarming display of power. I determined to shew my resolution, and teach them that I chose to maintain order and authority, and that I scrupled at nothing to accomplish my purpose.

I knew that nothing could be so severe a blow upon the party as to separate it from the head of the church. I hesitated

long before I adopted this resolution, because it was against my wishes; but the longer I delayed it, the more necessary it became to decide. I considered that Charles VI. who was more religious than me, and not so powerful, had dared to make a Pope prisoner. He was no worse for it, and I thought I might at least attempt as much. The Pope was carried off from Rome, and conveyed to Savona. Rome was annexed to France.

This stroke of policy sufficed to confound the schemes of the enemy. Italy remained quiet and obedient to the last moment of the empire. But the war of the church was pursued with equal inveteracy. The zeal of the devotees was rekindled. It became a secret but venemous spirit against me. In spite of all my precautions I could not prevent their communicating with Savona, and receiving instructions. The monks of La Trappe, of Fribourg, conducted this correspondence; it was printed in their house, and circulated from priest to priest throughout the empire. It became necessary to

remove the Holy Father to Fontainbleau, and to expel the monks of La Trappe, to put a stop to these communications. After all, I believe I did not succeed.

This petty war had a bad effect, because I could not prevent it from wearing the appearance of a persecution. I had been obliged to proceed with severity against unarmed persons, and, in spite of myself, to make victims of them. These unhappy disputes with the church forced upon me five hundred state prisoners; political occasions never made fifty. I was in the wrong throughout this affair; I was strong enough to have left the feeble at liberty, and I occasioned a great deal of evil by attempting to prevent it.

A great project occupied the state. It appeared to me to be of a nature to consolidate my empire by placing me in a new situation with regard to Europe. I expected important results from it.

My power was no longer contested; it only wanted the character of perpetuity, which it could not have as long as I had no heir. Without an heir my death would

have been a moment of danger to my dynasty; for authority must have no period fixed beforehand, if it is not to be contested.

I perceived the necessity of separating myself from a wife by whom I could no longer hope for posterity. I hesitated on account of the misery of quitting the person whom I best loved; it was long before I could resolve upon it. But she proposed it herself, with that devotedness of affection which she always displayed towards me. I accepted the sacrifice, because it was indispensable. The simplest policy pointed out to me an alliance with the house of Austria. The court of Vienna was tired of reverses. By uniting itself irrevocably with me, it placed its safety in my custody. By this alliance it became an accomplice in my greatness, and from that moment it became as much my interest to support it as it had been heretofore to subdue it. By this alliance we produced the most formidable mass of power that had ever existed; we surpassed the Roman empire.—The alliance was formed.

On the continent there was nothing without our pale, but Russia, and the wreck of Prussia: the rest was at our disposal. So vast a preponderance ought to have discouraged our enemies; and without vanity I might now have considered my work as accomplished, and that I had placed my throne beyond the reach of accident.

My calculations were just: but passion never calculates. Meantime appearances were in my favour. The continent was quiet, and seemed to be becoming accustomed to the sight of my crown; it at least appeared so by the homage paid me. It was so respectful, that a more discerning person than myself might have been deceived by it. The respect in which the blood of the house of Austria was held, rendered my reign legitimate in the eyes of the sovereigns of Europe; and I believed that the title of the son, which the Empress had just borne, to the throne, would not be disputed.

There were no disturbances any where but in Spain, where the English were in great force. But that war gave me no un-

easiness, because I was resolved to be even more obstinate than the Spaniards, and with time any thing may be accomplished.

The empire was strong enough to carry on the Spanish war without inconvenience. It neither put a stop to the decorations with which I was embellishing France, nor to the useful undertakings which we were pursuing. The administration of justice was improving. I was organising institutions which might ensure the strength of the empire, by educating a generation for the purposes of its support.

The necessity of maintaining the continental system was the only source of dispute with such governments as had coasts adapted for smuggling. Among these Russia was in a delicate situation: its civilization was not sufficient to enable it to do without English goods. I had nevertheless insisted on their being prohibited; it was an absurdity, but it was necessary to complete the system of exclusion. A contraband trade commenced; I foresaw it, because the Russian government does not watch well. But as shut doors are

always more difficult to pass through than open ones, smuggling never introduces near so many goods as a free trade. I thus obtained two-thirds of my object; however, I did not complain the less: they attempted to justify themselves, and then began anew,—we became angry; such a state of things could not last.

In fact, since our alliance with Austria, a trial of strength with Russia had become inevitable. Russia could not but perceive that our political union could have no enemy but herself, for we were masters of all the rest of Europe. She must therefore content herself with a complaisant non-entity, or attempt to make head against us and maintain her rank. She was too strong to consent to be nothing; but she was too feeble to resist us; in the alternative it was better to assume an attitude of defiance than to acknowledge herself conquered beforehand. This latter part is always the worst to take: Russia decided for the former.

I began to feel suddenly that there was some haughtiness in the transactions with

Petersburg. They refused to seize the contraband goods: they complained that I had occupied the lands of Oldenburgh. I replied in the same tone. It was clear that we were about to quarrel, for neither of us were patient, and we were strong enough to fight.

I was very confident as to the issue of the war; because I had conceived a plan by which I hoped to put an end for ever to the long struggle in which I had consumed my life. Besides, I thought that at the point to which we had now attained, the sovereigns of Europe had no direct interest in the conflict, for our interests had been identified; the policy of the princes should now have been in my favour, for it was no longer my office to shake thrones, but to strengthen them. I had added new strength to royalty, and in that I had wrought for them. They were sure of reigning while in alliance with me, equally sheltered from war and from revolution.

This policy was so palpable, that I thought the sovereigns clear-sighted enough to perceive it. I never distrusted them

Who in fact would have guessed that, seduced by their hatred against me, they would have abandoned the cause of the throne, and themselves have brought back a revolution among their people, to which they will sooner or later fall a sacrifice?

I had calculated that Russia was too large a body to make part of the European system which I had recast, and of which France was the centre. I therefore determined to exclude her from Europe, that she might not disturb the unity of my system. The new political line of demarcation required to be strong enough to resist the whole weight of Russia. That country was to be forced back within the limits she had occupied a hundred years ago.

Nothing but the immense mass of my empire could have been vigorous enough to attempt such an act of political violence. But I believe it was possible, and I believe it to be the only means of securing the world from the Cossacks.

To succeed in this plan it was necessary to re-organise Poland on a sound basis, and to beat the Russians in order to force them

to accept the new frontier that was to be traced with the point of the sword.—Russia might without disgrace have accepted the peace which was to fix these frontiers, because there was nothing offensive to her in the arrangement. It was an avowal of her strength and of our fear.

Thus placed by my precautions without the European pale—separated from our commonwealth by 300,000 guardians, Russia might have united with England. She would have preserved her political independence and her national existence in all their integrity; because she would have been as much out of our way as the kingdom of Thibet.

This was the only rational plan. Sooner or later its ruin will be regretted: for Europe, arranged by mutual consent in a uniform system, re-cast on the model required by the spirit of the age, would have offered the grandest spectacle that history had ever presented. But too many interested prejudices blinded the eyes of its sovereigns to allow them to perceive the danger

where it really existed. They fancied they saw it where the only safeguard could arise.

I set out for Dresden. This war was to decide irrevocably on the question which had been debated for twenty years; it was to be the last: for beyond Russia the world ends. Our enemies had but a moment: they therefore made a last effort. The court of Austria began with deranging my plans for Poland, by refusing to give up her share of it. I fancied myself obliged to keep up appearances with regard to her, and that instance of weakness ruined my scheme: for from the moment I yielded that point it was impossible to set openly about the independence of Poland. I was obliged to portion out the country on which the safety of Europe was to depend. By this weakness I spread distrust and discontent among the Poles. They saw that I sacrificed them to my own convenience. I felt my error, and was ashamed of it. I refrained from going to Warsaw, because I had nothing then to do there. I had nothing now to depend on for the fu-

ture fate of the Polish nation but the victories I might obtain.

I knew that boldness often ensures success. I thought it might be possible to do in one campaign what I had intended to have done in two. This haste pleased me—for my temper had become anxious and impatient. I was at the head of an army which knew no feeling but that of glory—no home but a field of battle. Instead of making sure of my ground, and advancing by gradual but certain steps, I traversed Poland and crossed the Niemen. I beat the armies that opposed me; I marched on without a halt, and I entered Moscow.

It was the last day of my good fortune. It should have been the last of my life.

Master of a capital that the Russians had left me in ashes,—I might have hoped that they would acknowledge themselves beaten, and accept the advantageous terms of peace I offered. But, at that moment, fortune abandoned our cause. England brought about a peace between Russia and the Sublime Porte, which gave Russia the

disposal of her whole force. A Frenchman whom chance had raised to the throne of Sweden betrayed the interests of his country, and allied himself with its enemies in hopes of bartering Finland for Norway.

He himself traced out the Russian plan of defence; and England prevented the court of Petersburg from accepting peace. I was astonished at the delay of its conclusion. The season was advancing. It became evident that there was no intention of peace. The moment I was sure of this, I gave orders for a retreat. The elements rendered it severe. The French acquired honour by the firmness with which they supported their reverses. Their courage never left them but with their life!

Shocked myself at their disasters, I was obliged to recollect that a sovereign ought never either to bend or weep.

Europe was still more astonished at my misfortunes than it had been at my success. But I was not to be deceived by its apparent stupor. I had lost the half of

that army which had overawed it. It might hope to overcome the remainder, for the proportions of our forces were altered. I foresaw, therefore, that the moment the first surprise was over, I should again find the eternal coalition in arms; its shouts of joy had already reached me.

The moment of defeat is an unfavourable one for the conclusion of peace. However, Austria, who was comforted for my humiliation, because by it her share of our alliance became more valuable, Austria proposed peace. She offered her mediation: it was refused: she had thrown away her credit.

I must therefore again be victorious: I felt sure of being so when I perceived that the public feeling of France went along with me. Never did history present a great people in a fairer light:—afflicted at their losses, but eager to repair them. In three months it was done. This single fact is a sufficient answer to the clamours of such as feel no triumph but in the disasters of their country.

France perhaps owes to me, in part, the

proud station she maintained in her hour of misfortune; and if in my whole career there is a time which deserves the esteem of posterity, it is that, for it was most painful to bear.

I appeared then at the opening of the campaign as formidable as ever. The enemy was surprised at the sudden reappearance of my eagles: the army I commanded was more warlike than accustomed to war; but it was the heir of a long series of glory, and I led it up to the enemy with confidence. I had a great task to perform, to re-establish our military credit, and to renew the struggle which had been so near its conclusion. I still possessed Italy, Holland, and most of the states of Germany. I had lost but little ground; but England redoubled her efforts. Prussia waged an insurgent war against us. The princes of the confederation were ready to join the strongest, and as I still continued so, they followed my standard, though languidly. Austria attempted to maintain a neutral dignity, while Germany was overrun with fire-

brands, who spirited up the people against us. My whole system tottered.

The fate of the world depended on chance; for there was no plan. A battle would decide it. Russia was to fight this battle, because she was strong and in earnest.

I attacked the Prusso-Russian army, and I beat it three times.

As my success deranged the plans of the favourites of England, they affected to abandon all hostile intentions, and commissioned Austria to propose peace.

The conditions were, in appearance, supportable, and many others in my place would have accepted them. For they only demanded the restitution of the Illyrian provinces and the Hanse towns; the nomination of independent sovereigns in Italy and Holland; the evacuation of Spain, and the restoration of the Pope to Rome. They were to have treated for the renunciation of the confederation of the Rhine and the mediation of Switzerland; but they were permitted to yield these two articles.

I must have been greatly lowered in public opinion, since they dared, after three victories, to ask me to give up countries that they had not yet even ventured to threaten.

If I had consented to this peace, the fall of the empire would have been more sudden than its rise. By the map, indeed, it would still have been great; but, in fact, it would have been nothing. Austria, by taking upon herself the office of mediatrix, broke through our alliance, and united herself to the enemy. By restoring the Hanse towns, I should have shewn that I could give back my possessions, and every body would have been for similar restitutions; I should have caused insurrections in every country. By evacuating Spain, I should have encouraged every species of resistance. By resigning the iron crown, I should have compromised that of the empire. The chances of peace were all against me; those of war might, perhaps, save me.

To say the truth, too great successes, and too great reverses, had marked the course of my history, to make it possible

for me to put off the decision to another day. The great Revolution of the 19th century must either be accomplished irrevocably, or be buried under a mountain of the dead. The whole world was present to decide the question. Had I signed peace at Dresden, I should have left it undecided, and it must have come forward a little later. I must have recommenced the long career of success, that I had already gone through; I must have recommenced it, although my youth was gone—My empire, to which I had promised rest, was wearied of the war, and ready to blame me for not accepting peace.

It was better, however, to take advantage of this critical moment, when the fate of the world depended upon the issue of a single battle; for, had I been victorious, the world would have been mine again.

I refused peace.—As every one prefers seeing with his own eyes, Austria saw nothing but my imprudence, and thought the moment favourable for going over to the enemy. I was not, however, certain of this defection, till the very last mo-

ment; but I was well able to sustain it.—My plan for the campaign was fixed. Its result would have been decisive.

The worst of great armies is, that the general cannot be every where. My manœuvres were, I think, the very best I had ever combined; but General Vandamme quitted his post, and was taken. Eager to make himself a Marshal of the Empire, M'Donald nearly drowned himself in the land-floods;—Marshal Ney let himself be quietly beaten:—My plan was overthrown, in a very few hours.

I was beaten;—I gave orders for a retreat;—I was still strong enough to act offensively, by changing my ground;—I did not choose to lose the advantage of all the places I occupied; for, by a single victory, I should still have been master of the North, as far as Dantzick; I therefore reinforced all my garrisons, with orders to hold out to the last. They obeyed my orders.

I retired, slowly, with a large body of troops; but still I retired, and the enemy followed, increasing at every step, for no-

thing fills the ranks like success. All the hatred that time had treasured up burst forth at once. The Germans revolted to be revenged for the evils of war—the moment was propitious; I was beaten. As I foresaw, the enemy appeared to spring out of the earth. I awaited them at Leipzig, on those very plains where they had been beaten just before.

Our position was not good, because we were attacked in a semi-circle. Victory itself could be of little use to us. In fact, the first day we had the advantage; but were unable to renew the attack. It was a drawn battle, and we had to begin again. The army fought well, in spite of fatigue; but then, by an act which posterity will designate as it pleases, the allies, who were in our ranks, turned suddenly against us, and we were conquered.

We set out for France; but so mighty a retreat could not be conducted without disorder: exhaustion and hunger destroyed many of our men. The Bavarians, after having deserted from our standard, attempted to cut off our retreat into France.

The French marched over their dead bodies, and gained Mayence. This retreat cost us as many men as that from Russia.

Our losses were so tremendous, that I myself was appalled. The nation was overwhelmed. If the enemy had pursued their march, they would have entered Paris with our rear guard: but the sight of France dismayed them: they long looked at our frontiers before they dared to pass them.

The question was no longer glory, but the honour of France: I therefore relied on the French. But I was unfortunate; I was ill served. I do not accuse the people; they are always ready to shed their blood for their country. I accuse no one of treachery, for it is more difficult to betray than people believe. I only accuse that despondency which is the result of misfortune: I was not free from it myself. He who is discouraged is undecided, because he perceives before him only a choice of evils; and indecision is the worst of ills in matters of importance.

I ought to have distrusted this general degradation more, and to have looked to

every thing myself. But I depended on a frightened ministry, which did every thing ill. The fortresses were neither repaired nor provided, for they had not been threatened for twenty years. The zeal of the peasants victualled them; but the greater part of the commandants were old invalids, who had been sent to them for repose. Most of my prefects were timid, and thought of packing up their goods instead of defending them. I ought to have changed them in time, that none but brave men might have appeared in my front ranks, if, indeed, such are to be found among those who have any thing to lose.

Nothing was as yet ready for our defence, when the Swiss gave up to the allies the passage across the Rhine. Notwithstanding their victories, the enemy had not dared to advance boldly; they crept on with caution: they were alarmed at marching without resistance through a country they had conceived to be so thick set with bayonets. They did not meet our advanced guard till they reached

Langres: then began that campaign which is too well known to need repetition; but which has left an immortal name to the handful of brave men who would not despair of the salvation of France. They restored me to confidence; and three times I believed that nothing was impossible with such soldiers.

I had still an army in Italy, and strong garrisons in the north; but I had no time to call them up: I must conquer on the spot. The fate of Europe hung on my person; there was not an important point but that on which I stood.

So doubtful were the allies of success, that they offered me peace. After having refused it at Dresden, I could not accept it at Chatillon. Before I could make peace I must save France, and reinstate our eagles on the Rhine.

After such a proof, our army would have been held invincible: our enemies would have trembled at the fatality which gave me victory. Still master of the south, and of the north by my garrisons, a single bat-

tle would restore my ascendancy; and I should have had the glory of reverses, as well as that of victory.

This result was prepared; my manœuvres had succeeded: the enemy was turned: he was losing himself. A general action would have ended every thing. One moment more—but my fall was fated: a dispatch which I had imprudently sent to the empress fell into the hands of the allies; it shewed them their danger. A Corsican who happened to be in their council shewed them that prudence was more dangerous than boldness. They took the only measure which I had not foreseen, because it was the only good one. They outstripped me, and marched upon Paris.

They had received promises that their entrance should be favoured; but this promise would have been unavailing, if I had left the defence of the capital in better hands. I had confided in the honour of the nation, and I had madly left those at liberty who I knew were without it. I arrived too late with succours, and that city,

which has never defended either its monarchs or its walls, had opened its gates to the strangers.

I accused General Marmont of having betrayed me: I now do him justice: no soldier betrayed the fidelity he owed his country; such wretches were found among a different class. But I was not master of myself, nor of my grief, when I saw the capitulation of Paris signed by my ancient brother in arms.

The cause of the revolution was no more from the moment I was conquered. It was neither the royalists, nor the cowards, nor the malcontents, who had overthrown me. The allies were the masters of the world, since I was no longer able to dispute the title with them.

I was at Fontainbleau, surrounded by a small but faithful band. I might have tried the chance of battle with it still, for it was capable of heroic actions. But France would have paid too dear for the pleasure of revenge. She would have justly had to accuse me of her sufferings.

I wish her to have nothing to accuse me of but the glory to which I raised her name. I was resigned.

They proposed different acts of abdication to me; I felt this to be a mummery. I had abdicated on the day on which I was conquered. But the formula might one day be of use to my son. I did not hesitate about signing it.

A numerous party would have wished that infant to be placed upon the throne, that the revolution might be maintained, together with my dynasty. But the thing was impossible. Even the allies had no choice. They were obliged to recal the Bourbons. Every one boasted of having brought about their restoration: but it was forced. It was the immediate consequence of the principles for which they had been fighting for twenty years. By assuming the crown, I had placed the throne out of the reach of the mob. By restoring it to the Bourbons, they placed it out of the reach of a fortunate soldier. It was the only means of putting out the revolutionary fire for ever. The putting

any other sovereign on the throne of France would have been a solemn recognition of the principle of the revolution; in other words, an act of insanity on the part of the sovereigns.

I will say more: the return of the Bourbons was a blessing to France. It saved her from anarchy; and promised repose, because it ensured peace. It was necessary between the allies and the Bourbons, because they guaranteed each other. France was not a party in that peace; because it was not made in her favour, but in favour of a family that it suited the allies to replace on the throne. It was a treaty intended to satisfy every body. Therefore it was the best manner in which France could have risen from the greatest defeat ever sustained by a warlike nation.

I was a prisoner, and expected to be treated as such; but either from that kind of respect inspired by a veteran warrior, or from the spirit of generosity which pervaded this revolution, they allowed me to choose an asylum. The allies granted me an island, and a title, that they re-

garded as equally vain. They permitted me (and in so doing their generosity was truly noble) to take with me a small number of those ancient soldiers with whom I had passed through such various fortune. They permitted me to take a few of those men whom misfortune cannot discourage.

"Separated from my wife and child, against every law divine and human, I retired to the Isle of Elba, without any kind of project for the future. I had become a mere spectator of the age. But I knew, better than any man, into what hands Europe was about to fall; and I therefore knew that it would be guided by chance; the turns of such a chance might bring me again into play. But the want of power to contribute towards it prevented me from forming any plans, and I lived like a stranger to the story. But the tide of events rolled on more rapidly than I had expected, and it came upon me in my retreat.

"I received the daily papers: I learned from them the external state of affairs.

I tried to seize their spirit, through the mist of false representations.

It was evident to me that the king had discovered the secret of the age. He had discovered that France had chosen the revolution. He had discovered by five and twenty years experience that his party was too weak to resist the majority. He knew that the majority will always make the law. He must therefore reign with the majority, that is, by and with the revolution. But that he might not become a revolutionist himself, the king was obliged to remodel the revolution by virtue of the divine right which he inherited.

The idea was ingenious; it made the Bourbons revolutionists with a safe conscience, and made the revolutionists royalists by supporting their interests and opinions. There was to be but one heart and one soul in the nation. The phrase was in every mouth, but it could not be true.

There was, however, so much felicity in this combination, that France under its

reign would have been flourishing in a very few years. The king, by a single stroke of the pen, might have solved the problem for which I had been fighting for twenty years; since he might have established the new political economy of France, and caused it to be recognised without dissent by all Europe. In order to succeed, the only requisite art was that of knowing how to be master at home.

To bring about this great work, the king had granted a charter, cast in the mould of all other charters. It was excellent—they are all excellent when they are put in practice. But as charters are only skins of parchment, they are of no value but by the authority which takes their execution upon itself. Now this authority resided no where: instead of concentrating it in the only responsible hands, the king allowed it to be frittered away among the party which was called by his name. Instead of being the sole head of the state, he allowed himself to be made the head of a party; every thing in France assumed a factious appearance. Anarchy appeared.

From that moment there was nothing but inconsistency and contradiction in the court. Words never agreed with things, because the courtiers in their hearts wished for things different from those which existed.

The king had granted the charter that it might not be forced from him; but it was evident that the royalists hoped to unravel it thread by thread, because in truth it did not suit them.

They had only therefore erected temporary piers for the arch of government; they had re-modelled the nobility, but they had given it neither privilege nor power. It was not democratic, for it was exclusive; it was not aristocratic, for it was a cypher in the state: it was, therefore, an injury to the nobility to have re-established it on such a footing; for they had set it up to be attacked, because it was offensive, without giving it the means of defence. This was an absurdity which could not but lead to continual strife.

They attempted to remodel the clergy, but they chose an apostate bishop to re-establish the throne and the altar. They

attempted to expunge the memory of the revolution—but they dug up its dead bodies.

They tried to make the revolution of 89 acceptable to the royalists, and the counter-revolution of the 31st March to the ex-conventionalists. Both attempts were ineffectual; for revolutions will suit none but those who have gone along with their spirit, and were born in it. The king should have had no man older than twenty about him.

They attempted to maintain the revolution; while they debased its institutions. Therefore they disheartened the bulk of the nation, which had grown up with them, and was accustomed to respect them.

They retained my soldiers, because they were afraid of them; and they had them reviewed by men who talked of glory while they bowed to the Cossacks.

There was no confidence in the existing state of things, because there was no visible centre of action. There was none in public interest, for it was compromised; nor in opinion, for it was crushed; nor in

power, because there seemed to be neither head nor hands at the summit of affairs.

I was tolerably well informed of all that passed at Vienna: at that congress where they were amusing themselves with apeing me. I learned, in good time, that the ministers of France had persuaded the congress to take me off the Isle of Elba, and to exile me to St. Helena. It was with some difficulty that I believed the Emperor of Russia would consent to such a violation of the faith of treaties; for I always esteemed his character highly; but at length, I became satisfied that it was so, and I set about measures for avoiding the destiny they were preparing for me.

My feeble means of defence would soon have been exhausted; I had therefore to endeavour to create such as might make me, a second time, formidable to my enemies.

France had no confidence in her government. The government had as little in France. The nation had found that its interest was not that of the crown, that that

of the crown was no less at variance with it. It was mutual treachery, which could not fail to ruin one or other of the parties. It was time to prevent it, and I conceived a plan, which will appear bold in history; but which, in fact, was very reasonable.

I aspired to re-ascend the throne of France. However weak my resources, they were superior to those of the royalists; for the honour of the country was my ally, a feeling which never dies in the heart of the French.

I relied on that support. I reviewed the diminutive force, which I destined for so great an enterprise. The soldiers were ill clothed, for I had not wherewithal to clothe them anew, but their hearts were firm.

My preparations were not long, for I carried nothing but arms with me. I relied on the French for furnishing us with every thing. The English officer, who resided with me, was amusing himself at Leghorn, and I set sail with a favourable wind.

Our little flotilla met with no accident; our passage lasted five days. I came in sight of the coast of France at nearly the

same spot on which I had landed fifteen years before, on my return from Egypt.—Fortune seemed to smile as she did then; I returned as at that time to that land of glory, to raise her fallen eagles, and to win back her independence.

I landed without an obstacle. I found myself once more in France. I had come back in misfortune. My train consisted of a small number of friends and brothers in arms, who had partaken of good and ill fortune with me; but this was a claim on the respect and love of the French.

I had no settled plan, because I had only vague notions on the state of things. I intended to be decided by circumstances. I had only taken some resolutions for probable occurrences.

I had but one road to take, because I wanted a strong hold. Grenoble was the nearest fortress; I therefore marched towards Grenoble, as quickly as possible, because I wished to ascertain what I had to depend on. The reception I met with on my road surpassed my expectations, and confirmed my intentions. I saw that that portion of the people, which was not

corrupted by passion or interest, retained a proud feeling, which was wounded by their humiliation.

I at length discovered the first troops that were sent against me. They were my own soldiers—I advanced without fear, for I knew they would never dare to fire upon me. They saw their Emperor marching at the head of their old masters in the art of war, who had so long shewed them the way to victory. I was still the same, for I brought back independence along with my eagles.

Who could for a moment believe that French soldiers would hesitate between official oaths taken on the banners of a stranger, and the faith they had sworn to one who had come to free their country?

The people and the soldiers received me with the same shouts of joy. These shouts were my only escort, but they were better than any splendour, for they promised me the throne.

I expected to meet with some resistance from the royalists; but I was mistaken: they made none, and I entered

Paris without even seeing any of them, except, perhaps, at the windows. There was never enterprize so rash, in appearance, which cost so little trouble in the execution: it was because it met the wishes of the nation, and that every thing is easy which goes along with public opinion.

This Revolution was effected in twenty days—without costing a single drop of blood. The aspect of France was changed. The royalists fled for help to the allies. The nation, left to itself, resumed its magnanimity. It was free; for, by placing me on the throne, it had exercised the greatest act of spontaneous power to which the people can claim a right. I could not have been there without its consent, for my six hundred men could never have conquered it. I was no longer dreaded as a prince, but beloved as a saviour. The greatness of my enterprize had blotted out my misfortunes: it had restored the confidence of the French; I was once more the man of their choice.

Never did a whole nation throw itself with so much self-devotion and intrepidity

into the most perilous situation; it calculated neither the danger nor the consequences. It was the love of independence that animated the people, to whom history will give the precedence over all others.

I had refused the treaty of Chatillon because I was upon the throne of France, and it would have made me stoop too low. But I might accept that granted to the Bourbons, because I had just come from the Isle of Elba; and one may stop as one ascends, but never as one is coming down.

I hoped that Europe, astonished at my return, and at the energy of the French people, would be afraid to renew the war with a nation so daring, and with a man whose single character was stronger than all its armies.

This would have been the case had the congress been dispersed, and had we treated with the princes one by one. But their pride took the alarm, because they were under the eyes of each other; and my attempts to keep the peace failed.

I ought to have foreseen this result, and to have availed myself, without delay, of

the first impulse of the people, to shew how formidable we might be. The enemy would have been dismayed at our boldness. He ascribed my hesitation to weakness. He was right; for I was no longer acting in character.

My pacific attitude lulled the nation to sleep, because I had allowed it to believe that peace was possible; from that moment my system of defence was overthrown, because the means of resistance were not adequate to the danger.

The only means of procuring revolutionary resources would have been to begin that great work anew; to stir up the passions in order to profit by their aberrations. Nothing less could have saved France.

I should have only had to regulate a second revolution as I had done the first; but I never loved popular commotions, because there is no rein to lead them by; and I deceived myself by imagining that we might defend Thermopylæ by loading each piece with a dozen cartridges.

I however set about a partial revolution, as if I had not been aware that half-mea-

sures are good for nothing! I offered the nation liberty, because it had complained of a want of it during my first reign. This liberty produced its usual effect; it put words in the place of actions. The imperialists were disgusted because I shook the system to which they had attached their interest. The bulk of the nation shrugged their shoulders, for they cared very little about liberty. The republicans distrusted my proceeding, for it was not natural to me.

Thus, I myself caused disunion in the state. I perceived it, but I relied on the war for a remedy. France had risen again with so much magnanimity; she had shewn such contempt for the future; her cause was so just (for it was that of the most sacred rights of nations); that I hoped the whole people would have armed themselves by a spontaneous movement of honour and indignation. But it was too late.

I felt the danger of my situation. I calculated the attack and the defence: they bore no proportions. I began to

doubt of my means: but it was not the time to confess it. By an unfortunate chance, my health was deranged as the crisis approached. My body was in a state of suffering; my mind irresolute. The armies advanced. In mine, the soldiers were full of devotion and enthusiasm; but the officers felt these emotions no longer. They were wearied; they were no longer young; they had fought long enough: they had estates and palaces. The king had allowed them to retain their fortunes and their places. They were now like adventurers risking them anew with me. They were beginning their career again; and, however well we may love life, no man would choose to live over again: it is asking too much of human nature.

I set out for head-quarters, alone, against the world. I tried to fight it. Victory was faithful to us the first day; but she deceived us the next. We were overcome, and the glory of our arms was put out on the same field where it was kindled twenty-three years before.

I might still have defended myself, for

my soldiers would not have deserted me; but they waged war against me alone. They called upon the French to give me up: it was proposing an act of cowardly meanness, in order to force them to fight. I was not worth so great a sacrifice. It was my part to give myself up. I had no choice. I determined to surrender myself. I hoped they would be content with the hostage I thus placed in their hands, and that they would put the crown upon my son's head.

I believe it would have been impossible to have placed him on the throne in 1814: but I think it might have been wise in 1815. I do not give my reasons—possibly the future may bring them to light.

I did not quit France till the enemy approached my retreat. As long as none but Frenchmen were about me, I chose to remain among them alone and unarmed. It was the last proof of confidence and affection I could give them. It was a testimony I bore to them in the face of the world.

France respected misfortune in my per-

son to the very moment in which I quitted her shores for ever. I might have gone to America, and exposed my defeat in the new world; but after having reigned over France, I could not think of debasing her throne by seeking glory elsewhere.

A prisoner in another hemisphere, I have nothing now to defend but the reputation History is preparing for me. She must say at least, that the man for whom a whole people devoted itself, could not be so destitute of worth as some of his cotemporaries assert.

A 24
ew 27 86 49

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 21 October, 2015